

Fourthly, For merchants, who remove for traffic, especially into places where the true religion is not professed, it may be suppressed with extremity of rigour.

1. It is lawful certainly to pass from country to country for traffic's sake and to maintain commerce, for there are divers commodities in divers places.

2. Conversation with heretics and infidels may be allowed, else we must go out of the world: 1 Cor. v. 9, 10, 'I wrote unto you in an epistle, not to company with fornicators, yet not altogether with the fornicators of the world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters, for then must ye needs go out of the world.' I speak of a civil commerce, which may be maintained with these cautions.

[1.] With all our traffic we must take all occasions to propagate religion in the truth and power of it especially when stirred up by impulse of spirit; Deut. xxxiii. 18, 19, 'And of Zebulun he said, Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out; and, Issachar, in thy tents. They shall call the people unto the mountain; there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness, for they shall suck of the abundance of the seas and of treasures hid in the sand.'

[2.] Traffic must be managed by fit persons, not novices, and persons ungrounded in religion; it is very dangerous for such. This is as if you should turn a child loose among a company of poisons; an empty pitcher soon cracks by the fire.

[3.] There must be no fixed habitation; if you thus leave the ordinances and societies of saints for trade, religion is made to stoop to gain.

SERMON XLII.

By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.—HEB. xi. 9, 10.

THE apostle is commending faith from the examples of the patriarchs; after the flood he beginneth with Abraham, the father of the faithful. In the former verse he speaks of the place whence he was called, in this of the place to which he was called; there he had commended him for his self-denial in obeying God's call, and here for his patience and constancy in waiting for the promise. From God's training up Abraham in a course of difficulties, we see it is no easy matter to go to heaven; there is a great deal of ado to unsettle a believer from the world, and there is a great deal of ado to fix the heart in the expectation of heaven. First there must be self-denial in coming out of the world, and divorcing ourselves from our bosom sins and dearest interests; and then there must be patience shown in waiting for God's mercy to eternal life, waiting his leisure as well as performing his will. Here is the time of our exercise, and we must

expect it, since the father of the faithful was thus trained up ere he could inherit the promises.

In these two verses we have a second effect of Abraham's faith and the reason of it.

In the ninth verse we have the second effect of Abraham's faith—'By faith he sojourned in the land of promise,' &c. There you may take notice of.

1. The act of obedience—*By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country.*

2. The symbol and rite by which this obedience was signified and expressed—*Dwelling in tabernacles.*

3. His fellows and followers in the same obedience—*With Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise.* Of these in their order.

First, I begin with the act of obedience—'By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country.' The words may be taken in a double sense, as they imply his condition of life and his disposition of heart. Abraham was both a literal and a spiritual stranger in the land of promise.

1. Let us look upon the expression as implying his condition of life. Abraham was not in the condition of an inheritor, but of a sojourner in the land of Canaan; therefore it is called the land of his sojournings, or in which he was a stranger: Gen. xvii. 8, 'I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger;' and so he confesseth to the children of Heth, Gen. xxiii. 4, 'I am a stranger and a sojourner with you.' This sojourning was an act of faith, because he was borne up by faith in the promise against all the troubles which he suffered. He had large lands and possessions in Ur of the Chaldees; but these he left, and when he came to Canaan, the land of promise, he might expect the fruit of his faith and labours; or else, having seen the land, to return with God's leave to the place from whence he came. But God had not yet done with the trial of his faith; from his father's house he was a voluntary and obedient exile; and in Canaan, where God brought him, he is still in the condition of a sojourner; the same faith that moved him to go he knew not whither, bindeth him there to wait God's leisure till he should enjoy the benefit of the promise, being contented in the meanwhile with what estate divine providence should allot.

I shall discuss but one question, and then come to the observations.

Quest. Why God would have Abraham tarry in Canaan? He might have shown him in the land, and then returned him to Ur of the Chaldees among his friends again. What are the reasons?

Ans. God's will is reason enough; but yet it seemed to be for these causes:—

1. Partly to avoid idolatry: Joshua xxiv. 2, 3, 'Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor: and they worshipped other gods. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan.' This was more dangerous among them of his own kindred, than among the Canaanites, and

more plausible, there being a greater acknowledgment of the true God, and so aptest to take.

2. For his trial and exercise, the father of the faithful was to be an example of self-denial, faith and patience.

3. To take livery and seizin of the land in behalf of his posterity, his faith was more stirred up by seeing it, and being constantly in it; by faith he could say, This is mine.

4. That he might be a means to bear forth the name of God among that people. The sins of the Amorites were not yet full. God sent them Abraham, as he sent Lot to Sodom.

5. To be a pattern of divine blessing and providence; for there he increased in riches wonderfully: Gen. xiii. 2, 'And Abraham was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold;' and so was an instance of the reward of obedience to the people of that land. He had not all in hope, but something in hand.

I come now to the notes; they may be taken from his condition, and from his submitting to that condition; for it was an act of his faith to sojourn in the land of promise, as in a strange land.

[1.] From his condition appointed by God upon special reasons.

(1.) Observe—From what inconsiderable beginnings the promise of God taketh place. Abraham cometh into Canaan as a poor sojourner; but yet to take seizin of the land, and there he is forced to borrow an habitation, and buy a burying-place. He borroweth an habitation, or place wherein to set his tent: Gen. xiv. 13, 'He dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite.' He was as it were tenant and farmer to Mamre; the whole land was his by right and by the grant of God, but others had the possession. And he buyeth a place of burial: Gen. xxiii. 8, 9, 'Entreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar, that he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he hath, which is in the end of his field: for as much money as it is worth he shall give it me, for a possession of a burying-place among you.' Otherwise he had not land enough whereon to set his foot: Acts vii. 5, 'And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on.' A strange beginning for so great promises! The first thing he takes possession of was a place of burial for the dead; that was all the purchase he made; so that his infeoffment and entrance was rather a resignation and farewell, and he seemed to provide more for a departure than an abode. Thus wonderfully is God wont to work, and by unlikely means to bring about the greatest effects: dead bones keep possession for four hundred years. Hereby his power is known: Ps. cv. 11-13, 'Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance; when they were but a few men in number; yea, very few, and strangers in it. When they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people.'

(2.) Observe, that God's promise is not always made good in kind. Abraham is called to a land which he should after receive for an inheritance; and instead of Canaan he hath heaven—a city founded not by the Amorites, but God. In performing temporal promises, God doth not always observe the letter, and give the particular blessing; but he giveth what is equivalent, or that which is better. This is the land that I will give thee; but yet 'he looked for a city that had foundations, whose builder and maker is God.' God's people have never cause to

complain of his breach of promise; if he change their wages it is for the better; a secret sense of his favour and possession of heaven is much better than to be king of all the world. Jacob complains of Laban, Gen. xxxi 7, 'Your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times,' but none have cause to complain so of God. Temporal promises are not always fulfilled in the letter, because God is not absolutely bound; but usually they have that which far exceedeth. If a man should promise another two hundred pounds, and give him an inheritance of so many hundreds or thousands by the year, here is no deceit. God is often better than his word; but never cometh short.

(3.) Observe, that temporal blessings are usually made good to the posterity of the faithful. Abraham was a stranger in the land of promise, and had not a foot of land there; but his posterity possessed it, and drove out the Canaanites. Believers have enough in God; and however he dealeth with them, they can wait upon him; but usually their posterity, if they have nothing else, enjoy many temporal blessings with respect to their father's faith. A land of promise contents Abraham; he leaveth the possession to his posterity. Thus it often falleth out—the father is rich in faith, and the children, though carnal, are rich in this world; they have the blessing of Ishmael, if not the blessing of Isaac.

(4.) Observe, that though God giveth a title, yet we must wait till providence giveth us fair possession. Abraham had a title given him by God, but the Amorites had the possession, therefore 'he sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange land.' Whatever our hopes are, faith maketh not haste. If we may have right as an heir to his land, or a lord to an estate that is leased out, or an unjustly exiled man to his possessions, yet we must use no irregular means, not secretly with the death of those that enjoy it—that is murder, but we must be contented for awhile to be as mere strangers, as Abraham was in the land of promise.

(5.) Observe, that God doth not cast a people out of their possessions till their iniquities be full. He had given the land of Canaan to Abraham, but he giveth him not the possession; and the reason is rendered, Gen. xv. 16, 'For the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.' His posterity was not to possess it till four hundred years after the first grant. Thus God gave the kingdom to David, but Saul possessed it a good while afterwards. Great is the patience of God to sinners, and the sentence is not executed as soon as past.

(6.) Observe, that the accomplishment of promises is delayed till a fit time. It was a land under promise; but yet to Abraham and his seed for awhile it was as a strange land. When Abraham wandered up and down like a stranger, where was the heritage that was promised to him? He might say, Is this my land which others possess? but he lets God alone with his promise. God is not slack, but we are hasty: Gal. iv. 4, 'When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.' Our times are always present, but God's time is not come. The Lord tarried so long, till it was high time to take vengeance of the Amorites for their sins; and till it was high time for the Israelites to shift dwellings, and the people were

grown to such a number, that they might not come by way of miracle to take possession, but by conquest. When the oven is hot, then is the loaf set in ; so when all circumstances concur, then shall the promise be accomplished.

(7.) Observe, a man that is called to converse with idolaters must converse with them as sparingly as may be. While Canaan was full of idolaters, Abraham must be but a sojourner, and must dwell in tents to profess his religion. Thus we have considered Abraham's sojourning as appointed by God.

[2.] Let us consider it as an act of faith and obedience. 'By faith Abraham sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country.' In his faith there are three things notable—his patience, his contentation, and his constancy.

(1.) His patience, not only in digesting the troubles of his present estate, but in waiting God's leisure. Observe, we must not be offended with delay, but must patiently wait for the accomplishment of God's promises. Abraham borrowed a place wherein to fix his tent ; Isaac is fain to struggle for a well ; and Jacob lived in a wandering and movable condition ; and yet they waited till God should make way for the possession of Canaan. What can we do in such a case ? can we live upon the reversion of a promise, especially of promises that are to be made good to posterity ? God is much glorified in our patient expectation, when we can think ourselves as well for that which shall come as if we were in actual and present possession. This is the property of faith : Heb. xi. 1, 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.' The word of God is enough to a believer, but carnal men are all for present possession ; they will trust God no further than they can see him.

(2.) His contentation. Observe, contentment with a small portion of earthly things is a great fruit of faith. By faith Abraham sojourned, though he had neither house nor home in the land of promise, but only a sepulchre ; this was enough. Faith doth not only beget a confidence, but also a composure of spirit, and submission to the Lord's will. A little thing will serve on earth, because we expect so much in heaven. Well then, do not always look to confidence, but to this contentation. Are carnal affections mortified ? can you submit to hardships ? Though in regard of temporals you find loss by trusting in God, yet is it enough that you have a promise of better things ? Then do you believe. Abraham was not covetous ; he looketh upon the spiritual rather than the earthly part of the promise ; he was not for fields and lands ; he saw that his Canaan must be heaven, and was content.

[3.] His constancy. You may observe in Abraham an unwearied constancy in obeying God and believing his promises, though all things seemed contrary. He sojourned where God would have him, and waited for what God would give him. Observe, that true faith adhereth to God, though it find not what it believeth, but is often disappointed, and seeth no probability of the thing promised. Abraham leaveth Ur of the Chaldees ; had not a foot of land in Canaan ; sojourneth among the Canaanites ; thence by a famine is driven into Egypt ; is often burdened with envy ; at length is told that the land belongeth to his seed ; yet he remaineth without issue for a long time, till he was a hundred years old ;

his seed threatened to suffer a long captivity, yet he hopeth against hope. Faith doth not look on the things promised, but on God; if it altogether looked on the things promised, it would soon fail and wax faint. Abraham's case was just like David's; the Canaanites were strong and mighty, and dwelt in cities, as wicked men, in David's time, when he was afflicted, 'prosper in the world, and increase in riches,' Ps. lxxiii. 12; but yet read verses 23-26, 'Nevertheless I am continually with thee; thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me by thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength my heart and my portion for ever.' They have God, and they have heaven, and thence ariseth this constancy of faith. Thus through all temptations must we be constant to the end. When difficulties arise, we think of returning into Egypt, still bear up.

Obj. But this is the property of strong faith.

Ans. No, but of all faith; strong faith overcometh temptations with less difficulty; but yet weak faith, if true, persevereth to the end through a thousand temptations. The disciples were *δλιγόπιστοι*, of little faith; yet saith Christ to them, Luke xxii. 28, 29, 'Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me.' Now though we have not such clear grounds to hope as Abraham, yet we have God's promises, and his word is as sure as an oracle. We trust in the same God, and look for the same heaven; therefore do not draw back, but continue with God, and own his cause in all trials.

Secondly, Let us look upon this expression of Abraham's sojourning in the land of promise as in a strange land; as it implieth the disposition of Abraham's heart, and not only the condition of his life. Canaan was assigned to Abraham, not only as a place of trial, but as a figure and pledge of heaven; therefore, because he expected a better country, and cities not built by the Amorites, but a city that hath foundations, built by God himself, therefore he is said to dwell there as in a strange country; he looked for another home, and therefore in Canaan he lived as a stranger. Thus the expression is taken elsewhere. When Abraham's seed was in a settled condition, and had taken possession of that land of which Abraham had only the promise, God tells them they were but strangers and sojourners: Lev. xxv. 23, 'The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me;' not only the wandering patriarchs, who flitted from place to place, but their posterity, even in the time of their greatest happiness and settled abode. David was a king; yet he saith, Ps. xxxix. 12, 'I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner as all my fathers were.' Now, lest this should seem an expression suited to David's case, when he was chased like a flea, or hunted like a partridge upon the mountains, you shall see; when he was settled in his kingdom towards the end and close of his life; when he had gotten so many victories, and his people lived quietly in their own possessions; and they offered so many cart-loads of gold and silver, yet then he confesseth, 1 Chron. xxix. 15, 'We are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.' The land never enjoyed greater peace, never flowed in greater wealth; the

people never seemed to be more at home, everyone sitting and singing under his own vine and fig-tree, yet saith he, 'We are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as all our fathers were.' So we are taught in the gospel, 1 Peter. ii. 11, 'Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.' They to whom Peter wrote were strangers in a literal sense: 1 Peter. i. 1, 'To the strangers scattered throughout Pontus,' &c. But it is there taken in a spiritual sense, as appears by the exhortation. Out of all—

Observe, that the children of God there, where they have best right and most possessions, are but strangers and pilgrims. How settled soever their condition be, yet this is the temper of the saints upon earth, to count themselves but strangers. All men indeed are strangers and sojourners; but the saints do best discern it, and most freely acknowledge it. Wicked men have no firm dwelling upon earth, but that is against their intention; their inward thoughts and desire is, that they may abide for ever; they are strangers against their wills, their abode is uncertain in the world, and they cannot help it. And pray mark, there are two distinct words used in this case in Peter, 'as strangers and pilgrims'—*ὡς παροίκους καὶ παρεπιδήμους*; and in the old testament 'strangers and sojourners.' A stranger is one that hath his abode in a foreign country; that is not a native and denizen of the place, though he liveth there; and in opposition to the natives he is called a stranger; as if a Frenchman should live in England, he is a stranger. But a pilgrim and a sojourner is one that intendeth not to settle, but only passeth through a place, and is in motion travelling homeward. So the children of God, in relation to a country of their own in another place—namely, heaven, they are denizens there, but strangers in the world; and they are sojourners and pilgrims in regard of their motion and journey towards their own country. Now, wicked men are only strangers in regard of their unsettled abode in the world but they are not pilgrims; they have no inheritance to expect in heaven; here is the place where they would abide for ever. Let God keep heaven to himself, so they might have the world; 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 briefly I shall show you—(1.) How christians are strangers and pilgrims; (2.) The inferences of duty from hence; (3.) How we may get our hearts into such a frame;

1. The resemblance between the temper of the saints and the condition of a stranger and pilgrim. The allusion may be taken from an ordinary strangership and pilgrimage, or from the pilgrimage of Israel through the desert into Canaan.

[1.] From an ordinary pilgrimage.

(1.) A stranger is one that is absent from his country, and from his father's house. So are we; heaven is our country; God is there, and Christ is there. The apostle saith, 2 Cor. v. 6, 'Whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.' We are strangers there, where we are absent from God and Christ—*Ubi pater, ibi patria*; our birth is from heaven, and thither we tend. Rivers run away from their springs, and never return more; but it is not so with us; our springs are in Christ, and our streams are to him; the tendency is according to the principle. Our birth is from heaven, and thither are

the motions and tendencies of renewed souls ; thence they came, and thither they tend.

(2.) A stranger in a foreign country is not known, nor valued according to his birth and breeding ; so the saints walk up and down in the world like princes in disguise—‘ The king’s daughter is all glorious within,’ Ps. xlv. 13. The world knoweth not our birth, nor our breeding, nor our hopes, nor our expectations.—‘ Our life is hid with Christ in God,’ Col. iii. 3 ; and therefore we are often judged according to the flesh and outward appearance, but live unto God in the Spirit.

(3.) Strangers are liable to inconveniences ; so are godly men in the world—*Religio scit se peregrinam esse in terris*, saith Tertullian, it is like a strange plant brought from a foreign country, and doth not agree with the nature of the soil, it thriveth not in the world. Wicked men prosper here ; they are like thistles and nettles, that grow of their own accord ; the world is their native soil.

(4.) A stranger is patient, standeth not for ill-usage, and is contented with pilgrim’s fare and lodging. We are now abroad, and must expect hardship—‘ In the world you shall have tribulation,’ John xvi. 33. God permitteth inconveniences to arise to wean us from the world, and make us long for home.

(5.) A stranger is wary that he may not give offence and incur the hatred and displeasure of the natives. We had need to ‘ walk wisely towards them that are without,’ Col. iv 5 ; we are in the land of our observers.

(6.) A stranger is thankful for the least favour ; so must we be thankfully contented with the things God hath bestowed on us. Anything in a strange country is much : 1 Chron. xxix. 13–15, ‘ We thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort ? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners as were all our fathers.’

(7.) A stranger that hath a journey to go would pass over it as soon as he can ; and so we, who have a journey to heaven desire to be dissolved : Phil. i. 23, ‘ Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.’ It is the joy of their souls to think to be at home with Christ.

(8.) A stranger buyeth not such things as he cannot carry with him ; he doth not buy trees, house, household stuff, but jewels and pearls, and such things as are portable. So such things as we can carry with us to heaven should take up our time and care. Piety and godliness outlives the grave ; our wealth doth not follow us but our works follow us ; and therefore our great care should be to get the jewels of the covenant, the graces of God’s Spirit, those things that will abide with us.

(9.) A stranger’s heart is in his country ; so is a saint’s : Phil. iii. 20, τὸ πολίτευμα ἡμῶν—‘ Our conversation is in heaven ; ’ these are his thoughts, thither he is drawing home his trade ; so is a christian drawing his heart heavenward : heaven is his home, this life is but the way. But now when men lavish out their respects by wholesale upon

the world, and can scarce retail a thought on heaven, they are not passengers but inhabitants; here they are at home.

(10.) A stranger is inquisitive after the way, fearing lest he should go amiss; so is a christian: Ps. exix. 19, 'I am a stranger in the earth, hide not thy commandments from me.' We need direction in a strange place; there are so many byways in the world that we may soon miscarry, and be led by our own lusts, or the suggestions of others, into such ways and practices as God doth not allow.

(11.) A stranger provides for his return, as a merchant that he may return richly laden. When you send a child for breeding beyond the seas, he taketh care that when he returns he may return as a man accomplished, so as to please his father. So we must appear before God in Zion; what manner of persons ought we to be? Let us return from our travel well provided.

[2.] It carryeth some resemblance with Israel's travelling in the wilderness, when they came out of Egypt to go into the land of Canaan. They were brought out of Egypt, and we are taken out of the power of darkness: Col. i. 13, 'Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.' They had the law given them in the wilderness, and God's word is our light during our pilgrimage: Ps. exix. 105, 'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.' They were fed with manna from heaven, and we have Christ, who is hidden manna, the bread that came down from heaven: John vi. 31, 32, 'Our fathers did eat manna, in the wilderness, as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Moses gave you not that bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.' They were guided by the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire, which never forsook them till they came to Canaan, and we are under God's providence and fatherly care: Ps. lxxiii. 24, 'Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory.' In the wilderness they were troubled with fiery serpents as we are with fleshly lusts: 1 Peter ii. 11, 'Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, that war against your souls.' Then Amalek rose up against them, and smote their rear, and we have our persecutors and oppressors in the world: 2 Tim. iii. 12, 'Yea and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.' The clusters of grapes and excellent fruits of Canaan were brought to them in the wilderness, and we have the first-fruits of the Spirit: Rom. viii. 23, 'And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.' We have the beginnings of heaven during our pilgrimage, grace, peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost; these fruits are brought as a taste of the goodness of the land, and as a pledge of their interest in it. By the cluster of grapes God gave them livery and seizin of Canaan, so by the first-fruits of the Spirit we have a taste and earnest of the heavenly state. Moses brought them to the borders of Canaan, but Joshua led them into the land, as Jesus leadeth us into heaven. Good works are the way, but not the cause of entrance.

2. What are the inferences of duty that may be drawn hence.

[1.] We learn to mortify fleshly lusts, because these weaken our desires of heaven, and hinder us in our journey. This is the apostle's inference: 1 Peter ii. 11, 'Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.' If we were not pilgrims bound for another world, it were more tolerable to gratify the senses, and to give contentment to every carnal desire; but we are in a journey, and therefore should mortify fleshly lusts. Brutish affections are all for the present, and weaken our desires of things to come; like the flesh-pots of Egypt, they make us forget heaven, and forget home. They distract the mind, and draw it another way, that it is cumbered with much serving; as it was said of Martha, Luke x. 40, 'Martha was cumbered about much serving.' The soul must have some oblectation and delight; love cannot remain idle. When the pipes leak, the course of the stream is diverted. And as they distract, so they load and clog the soul; we feel no more weight than a bird under her feathers, but indeed they are the soul's load: Heb. xii. 1, 'Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.' Immoderate and carnal affections, like a weight, press the soul downward: 2 Tim. iii. 6, 'They lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts.' Fishes feel no weight, though they swim ever so low in the waters; heavy bodies are never heavy in their proper places. A man that hath set up his rest here doth not feel lust to be a weight and load to him; but to one that looketh towards heaven they are burdensome, as a clog to his soul, that depresseth him in all his heavenly flights and motions. And they do not only distract and clog, but they distemper the soul. The racers were dieted for the Isthmic games: 1 Cor. ix. 25, 'Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things.' So saith the apostle, 'I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection,' ver. 27. Lusts put us quite out of temper for a heavenly journey. Therefore as strangers and pilgrims you must mortify fleshly lusts by prayer, watchfulness, beating down the body, cutting off the provisions of the flesh, and the like means.

[2.] Do not embroil yourselves in the cares of this world. God is called a stranger and a wayfaring man when he seems not to administer to the wants and necessities of his people: Jer. xiv. 8, 'Why shouldst thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night?' Do not entangle yourselves in worldly pursuits and practices; your abode is here but for a time, and you know not how soon you may be called hence: 1 Cor. vii. 29-31, 'The time is short: it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none, and they that weep as though they wept not, and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not, and they that buy as though they possessed not, and they that use this world as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away.' Use the world as if you used it not. You do not stay but lodge here, therefore use the things of the world as passengers do things in an inn; they use them as being willing and ready to leave them the next morning. Who would trouble himself to hang his room in an inn for a night? We are strangers, and our days are but as a shadow, and to-morrow we must

be gone ; and therefore, though we may follow our callings with cheerfulness and diligence, yet we should not make worldly gain our business. You make the world your home when the heart is filled with sins and the head with cares, and all to grow great, and shine in pomp and pleasure. A pilgrim doth not make purchases in a foreign country, but he is contented with a *viaticum*, so much as will serve him in his journey ; but when men join field to field as if they would shine alone, it is a sign they make this their home. Follow your callings, and be content with God's allowance,—it is enough to make your journey comfortable,—and let not these things take up your heart as if here were your rest ; use them as an instrument of piety and charity, as a help to a better life : delight in them only as a help to the journey, then they will not prove a hindrance. We cannot get out of the world when we please, we are tenants at will to God, but let us get the world out of us ; and so shall we do if we use it as if we used it not, when we do not make the world our end, our rest, our main work, but only mind it in a subordination to a better life. When we make it our end by an irregular aim, our work by an intemperate use, our rest by an immoderate delight, we are at home ; God may keep heaven to himself for us. God in mercy appoints us callings to busy our minds as a fit diversion after worship :—sins settle in us by idleness, as wheat grows musty in the garner if it be not turned and stirred ;—and as a means of our support and usefulness : Eph. iv. 28, ' Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.' But if we labour in them with other ends, we seek not another country, even heaven, and are contented with our pilgrimage.

[3.] Mind home more. We should always be winding up our affections, as those that keep clocks ; the weights run down of their own accord, but we wind them up morning and evening : Ps. xxv. 1, ' Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.' Some there are who may despise the profits of this world, but they are not heavenly ; they lose something, but they find nothing in the room of it. If we are pilgrims, we should seek a city that is to come : Heb. xiii. 14, ' For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come ;' that is, in our desires, thoughts, endeavours, and groans after it : Ps. cxx. 5, ' Wo is me that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar.' Daily desires and groans are the saint's harbingers, which are sent into heaven before us ; and by this means we tell God that we would be at home. Therefore you should be ever setting of your minds this way ; some time should be redeemed for this purpose every day, that we may stir up our affections and serious thoughts to converse with God. We have no help else against the snares of the world ; it is an infectious air, and we had need take cordials and antidotes : 2 Peter i. 4, ' Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.' This refresheth the divine nature in us, and keepeth our hopes alive. There are a great many temptations in the world through lust, and it is needful, as well as sweet and pleasant, to have our thoughts upon heaven.

[4.] Do not conform yourselves according to the fashions of the

world: Rom. xii. 2, 'And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.' You are strangers here; live not according to the customs and fashions of the world. If an Englishman were in America, where he saw none but rude savages that had not shame enough to cover their nakedness, would he conform himself to their fashions and guises? We are in danger to miscarry by example, as well as by lust. It is the fashion of the world to be profane and unmortified, to be careless of God and heavenly things, to break the sabbath, to neglect private duties, and the exercise of religion in their families, to spend their whole time in eating and drinking, buying, selling, trading. You are of another country, Jerusalem that is above is the mother of us all; therefore you are to live by other laws, and in another fashion. Besides, in every age there is some wicked custom afoot, which, by being common, becomes less odious, and your course must be contrary to it. Dead fishes swim with the stream, and wicked men walk *κατ' αἰῶνα*, 'according to the course of this world,' Eph. ii. 2. Sin, when common, is less odious. But a stranger should by his habit and appearance declare his country, and that he is not ashamed to own it; so do you declare that you are acted by higher principles and more glorious hopes than the men of the world are acted by. God hath chosen us out of the world, and we should discover the excellency of our principles and hopes by not conforming ourselves to the present world.

[5.] It teacheth us patience, to endure the inconveniences of this life without murmuring. Many that travel abroad are ill entreated, not respected according to their birth. But consider, we have but a little while to stay, and in the midst of all troubles remember home: Ps. xxvii. 13, 'I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.' Heaven is the true land of the living. There are commotions in the world, but heaven is a quiet place. If we are assaulted with troubles, it is to make us long for home, to better our hearts or hasten our glory. If the world did not vex the godly, it might possibly ensnare them, and entice their affections to love it and desire to abide in it. The world's hostility is the security of the saints: Gal. vi. 14, 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.' The world never cared much for me, nor I much for the world. Their injuries turn to our gain, and mortification to make us look homeward.

[6.] It teacheth us submission to the hand of God for our godly departed friends. Let us not grieve for the departed in the Lord, they are but gone home. The apostle speaketh of some 'that were in Christ before him,' Rom. xvi. 7. They are in heaven before us, and we must wait our time; after a wearisome journey they rest from their labours, and solace themselves in the bosom of Jesus Christ.

SERMON XLIII.

By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.—HEB. xi. 9, 10.

3. I now come to the means how to get our hearts into such a frame as I have before discoursed on.

[1.] Let us enjoy as much of heaven as we can in our pilgrimage, in the beginnings of grace, the first-fruits of the Spirit, and in the ordinances.

(1.) In the first-fruits of the Spirit: grace is young glory, and joy in the Holy Ghost is the suburbs of heaven. You enter upon your country and inheritance by degrees: fulness of joy is for the life to come, and joy in the Holy Ghost is the beginning of it. As the winds carry the odours and sweet smells of Arabia into the neighbouring provinces; so the joys of heaven, those sweet smells and odours of the upper paradise, are by the breathings and gales of the Spirit conveyed into the hearts of believers. This is our advance-money, our taste in the wilderness, our morning-glances of the daylight of glory. Union with Christ is the beginning of heaven, it is heaven in the moulding and framing.

(2.) In the ordinances. The time of our pilgrimage is a sad time. How should we solace ourselves? Ps. cxix. 54, 'Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage,' our cordials to cheer and strengthen us. The ordinances are types of heaven. Prayer bringeth us to the throne of grace, and giveth us an entrance into God's presence. In the word 'preached' is the presence of the blessed Trinity, bringing down heaven itself to us, and the angels are attending on our congregations: 1 Cor. xi. 10, 'For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head, because of the angels.' The Lord's supper is a pledge of that new wine we shall drink in our Father's kingdom. By reading we talk with the saints departed, prophets and apostles, that wrote what we read. Meditation bringeth us into the company of God, and where we walk God walketh with us, and at home or abroad we are still with God. The sabbath is a type of heaven: Heb. iv. 9, 'There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God.' Here is a ceasing from work, and there is a ceasing from sin and misery, and an eternal rest and repose in the bosom of Christ. Psalms do fitly resemble hallelujahs, the word lectures of praise that shall be read over the free grace of God and redemption by Christ to all eternity. The congregation signifies the general assembly and congregation of saints and angels above, Heb. xii. 23. So that a christian is even seated in heaven when in and about the ordinances.

[2.] The enjoyment of any temporal blessing should stir us up to the more serious consideration of heavenly blessings; there are better things laid up in heaven. As the prodigal's husks put him in mind of the bread that was in his father's house, and the cities of the Amorites put Abraham in mind of the city that had foundations, whose builder

and maker is God; so should we be put in mind of heaven by those things we enjoy here. If a strange place affords us content and refreshment, will not our country much more? If the creature be sweet, heaven is better. Look through the glass to the sun, it is our medium, not our object. A spiritual use of the creature doth much raise our hearts. We help our souls by our bodies, and make the senses which were wont to be the inlets of sin to be instruments of heavenly-mindedness. Grace can work matter out of anything it seeth; a good man can distil precious liquor out of common matters; he can see another world in this world, and doth not only make a temporal use of the creatures, but a spiritual.

[3.] Go to God to circumcise the foreskin of the heart. There is a fleshliness that cleaves to us which maketh us altogether for a present good, the world is at hand. God can only cure this by infusing a divine nature: 2 Peter i. 4, 'That by these ye may be made partakers of a divine nature, having escaped the corruptions that are in the world through lust.' There must be a heavenly birth, or else a man taketh himself for this world's child, and will go no further.

[4.] Get a clearer and more sensible interest in Christ. He that is in Christ is in heaven already: Eph. ii. 6, 'And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.' He is there in his head; a christian holdeth all *in capite*. When Christ was glorified, he seized on heaven in our right. We use to say of an old man, He hath one foot in the grave; so a believer that is in Christ hath more than a foot in heaven, his head is there, he is ascended with Christ. Nothing but faith can unriddle this mystery, how a believer should be on earth and yet in heaven; his head is there, and this draweth the heart after it; head and heart must be together. And therefore acquaint yourselves with Christ, clear up your interest in him, this will wean you from the world. The woman left her pitcher when she knew Christ, John iv. 28. There is your treasure, and your affections will carry you where Christ is: Col. iii. 1, 'If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God;' Phil. iii. 20, 'For our conversation is in heaven, whence we look for a saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.'

[5.] Meditation is of great use; it bringeth a believer into the company of the blessed, and puts his head above the clouds, in the midst of the glory of the world to come. Meditation is but a more temperate ecstasy. As Paul by his rapture was in the third heavens, so are we by our thoughts; we get upon the top of Nebo or Pisgah, and take a view of the promised land. Great hopes are known by thoughts; thoughts are the spies of the soul. Where a thing is strongly expected, the thoughts are wont to spend themselves in creating images and suppositions of contentment we shall receive when we enjoy this thing. If a poor man be adopted into the succession of a crown, he would be feasting and entertaining himself with the happiness and pleasure of that estate. When a man minds only earthly things, earthly thoughts salute him first in the morning, busy him all day, lay him down in his bed, play in his fancy all night; the thoughts of God and his kingdom find no access. Glances only on heaven are an evidence of a carnal heart that is at home. The more heavenly a christian is, the more he

is himself; as the more rational and considerate a man is, the more he is a man.

[6.] Prize the communion of saints, this is heaven begun. A godly man, when he was to die, said, I shall change my place, but not my company. They that expect to be there where God, and Christ, and the saints are, should delight more in converse with them here. In a foreign land a man is glad to meet with his own countrymen; we should be glad to meet with those that go with us to heaven. A christian will converse with such as he shall be with hereafter; it is of great use and quickening to him. Good discourse conveyeth warmth: Luke xxiv. 32, 'Did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?' Saul in the company of the prophets became a prophet. Earthly men will gain benefit hereby; as a dead man will have some heat, being plied with warm clothes.

Use 1. Put in your name among them that profess themselves to be strangers and pilgrims: Heb. xi. 13, 'They confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth;' and that in your best estate, if it be in the land of promise, where you have most right, in the midst of peace, tranquillity, and worldly enjoyments, where you have most possessions. Consider what reason you have to count yourselves strangers and pilgrims, and what profit you will have by it.

1. What reason you have so to count yourselves. Consider how frail we are, how uncertain our comforts; how frail we are, this is not our rest. In our best estate we are but frail: Ps. xxxix. 5, 'Verily every man at his best estate is altogether vanity.' Every word is emphatical; there is an asseveration, 'verily;' a universal particle, 'every man,' and that 'at his best estate.' The sun in the zenith beginneth to decline. Paul's rapture was seconded with a messenger of Satan; after a sight of heaven he had a taste of hell. When worldly happiness is at the full, it beginneth to decline. And he is not only vain and weak, but vanity itself, and altogether vanity. No man hath a constant fixed abode in the world. And then the uncertainty of worldly things; we are mortal, and all our enjoyments have their mortality. The world is full of changes. Who would build a house where there were continual earthquakes? or set up his abode and dwelling-place upon the sea? or lay a foundation upon the ice, that is gone with the next heat and warmth? Especially God's children, who have least of the world. And then it is not our rest; if you had the world at will, you have higher things to look after; this is not your happiness. As that pilgrim said that was travelling to Jerusalem, But this is not the holy city: Micah ii. 10, 'Arise you, and depart, for this is not your rest.' It is the greatest judgment God can inflict upon thee, for thee to take up thy rest here, to be condemned to successes and worldly felicity; better never have a day of rest and ease in the world: Luke xvi. 25, 'Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things;' Ps. xvii. 14, 'From men of the world, which have their portion in this life;' Jer. xvii. 13, 'They that depart from me shall be written in the earth,'—it is a punishment laid on them that depart from God.

2. What profit you will have by it; it will keep you from lusts and

snares. Birds when they soar aloft, need fear no snares; he that counts heaven his home, and the world a strange country, hath a great advantage of others, for he is delivered from the snares of the world. This disposition doth hurt to nothing but to carnal mirth: but it makes way for heavenly refreshings and sweet comforts. Nay it is the best piece of good husbandry, for it is the best way to provide for the world: Mat. vi. 33, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you:' you drive on two cares at once. None hold the world by a better tenure than those that are strangers. Abraham dwelt in tents, and Lot dwelt in a city; and Lot in the pleasant valley found less rest than Abraham in his tent: his lingering in Sodom had cost him dear if God had not pulled him out. It will make us end our days with comfort. Death is an advantage to a spiritual stranger and pilgrim here: it is a going home after a tedious journey. A man readily leaveth the place he abhorreth, and goeth to the place he loveth; so if once we could get our affections from the world, death would not be so dreadful. Carnal affections make us unwilling to die; we are wedded to present things and that makes us loth to depart hence.

Use 2. Reproof to those that fix their rest here. 'It is good to be here,' saith Peter, but as applied to the world is a brutish speech; it is contrary to sense, experience, and reason.

1. Contrary to sense. Let me convince you by your eyes. Look to the frame of man's body, not only the constitution of his soul, but the frame of his body; we do not go grovelling on the earth as beasts, nor are we stuck into the ground as trees; man is of an upright stature, his head is to heaven and his feet to the earth, the seat of the senses is nearest heaven: Ps. viii. 6, 'Thou hast put all things under his feet.' But now when men spurn at heaven, when their heads and hearts are fixed on the earth, this is like a man standing upon his head. Worldly men are like worms that come out of the earth, live on it, creep on it, and at length creep into it, and that is all. Let me again convince thee by thine eyes. Consider the frame of heaven; those aspectable heavens are the most glorious part of the creation, far more glorious than the lower world, and yet it is but the under part of the pavement of heaven. What then is the heaven of heavens, if the lowest part of heaven be so beautiful.

2. Contrary to our experience, as men or as christians.

[1.] To our experience as men. Why do you fix here? The world thrusteth us from itself by miseries, and at last by death; then there is a violent ejection, here it entertaineth us as a stepmother; but we linger in it as Lot lingered, he was loth to go out of pleasant Sodom till the angels pulled him out: Gen. xix. 16, 'And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters, the Lord being merciful unto him, and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.' We are often frustrated by a just and merciful providence, and we should make use of our disappointments. Providence doth often buffet us when it finds us busy where we should not; where we are more strangers, there we are most employed. When we stick to the earth, God cometh to pull us off.

[2.] To our experience as christians. Afflictions serve to make a divorce between us and the world, but much more sins. Crosses are grievous to all, but sins to the godly; sin hindereth us of the free enjoyment of heaven, as crosses do of the comforts of the world. Sin is evil in itself, though we feel it not. Affliction is only evil to our feeling because it smarts; affliction is as wormwood, bitter; but sin is as poison, deadly; it separates us from God, which affliction does not. Sin is contrary to the new man, eclipseth the light of God's countenance, hindereth the enjoyment of God in Christ, which is a heaven upon earth, as desertion is the soul's hell. Many complain of crosses that complain not of sins; they look upon heaven as a reserve and place of retreat when beaten out of the world, which is neither a mark nor a work of grace. A beast will leave a place where it findeth neither meat nor rest. But this makes the children of God weary. Here is a condition of sinning and offending God which is most grievous to the godly. Paul groans on this account: Rom. vii. 24, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' If any had cause to complain of misery Paul had, being in perils and sufferings often; but that which he complains of is sin. What a grief is it to a christian to meet with a temptation at every turn, to find every sense a snare and every creature a bait; we can scarce open our eyes but we are in danger.

3. It is contrary to reason. We were not made for the world but the world for us. Whenever we enjoy the world, we see the error of our esteem; it cannot satisfy our desires, nor recompense our pains. Those that enjoy it least are safest; the world cannot make us better, it may make us worse; all the riches and honours of the world cannot endue thy person with any true good. That is good that makes us good, reason will judge so; now the whole world cannot make us better, but grace will. Beware then of fixing your rest here below, which is betrayed by the complacency of your souls in worldly things, by your lothness to die, by seldom thoughts of heaven. Oh, this wretched disposition is contrary to sense, experience, and reason!

Secondly, We are now come to the ceremony and rite by which this obedience of Abraham was signified and expressed—'Dwelling in tents.' A tent is opposed to a house, or settled dwelling: 1 Chron. xvii. 5, 'For I have not dwelt in an house since the day that I brought up Israel unto this day, but have gone from tent to tent, and from one tabernacle to another.' The tabernacle was a figure of the church, and the temple of heaven. Houses were then in fashion; Lot had his house in Sodom, Gen. xix. 2-4, and Abraham was rich and able to build; it was not out of necessity but choice that he dwelt in tents. You may look upon it, partly, as an act of policy; partly, as an act of religion.

1. As an act of policy, that they might live in a strange country peaceably, free from the envy and grudge of the natives, who are not wont to brook the increase and greatness of strangers, but thenceforward seek to root them out. Thus the Rechabites, who were strangers in Israel, dwelt in tents: Jer. xxxv. 7, 'Neither shall ye build houses, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have any; but all your days ye shall dwell in tents, that ye may live many days in the land where ye

be strangers;’ it was the advice of Jonadab their father to them. Such a thing befell Isaac, the grudge of the natives at the prosperity of his flocks: Gen. xxvi. 12–14, ‘Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundred-fold, and the Lord blessed him. And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great. For he had possession of flocks and possession of herds, and great store of servants. And the Philistines envied him.’

2. As an act of religion, to express their heavenly hopes, or to acknowledge the hopes and desires of a world to come in the midst of a profane age. Here they had no settled abode, as the tent was an ambulatory kind of dwelling, removed from place to place. As afterwards at the feast of tabernacles, for seven days the people remained in booths to put them in mind of heaven and their forefathers dwelling in tents: Lev. xxiii. 42, 43, ‘Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths, that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt.’ Now what shall we learn out of this? I answer, Several lessons.

[1.] It teacheth us patience and contentation, if we have but a mean house and dwelling, or if we are forced to wander, or if we are burdened with the envy of a strange country.

(1.) If we have a mean house and dwelling. Abraham had none at all, but only a tent; yet there God appeared to him, and there he entertained angels, Gen. xviii. 1, 2. No place can be so mean as to exclude God: you may have as much communion with him in a thatched cottage as in a lofty palace, yea, many times more. The sun shineth as merrily on a hovel as on a magnificent structure: so doth God visit the poor, and shine upon them in Christ as well as the great and rich. Some of them, ‘of whom the world was not worthy, wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth,’ Heb. xi. 38, places of mean retirement. John had his revelation in Patmos in an obscure cave; he had more visions of God in a cave than others could have in a palace.

(2.) If you are driven up and down, and have no certain dwelling-place, remember the patriarchs lived in tents, movable habitations, that were often shifted and changed. David had sweet experiences of God in the wilderness, when he was hunted up and down like a flea: Ps. lxiii. 3, ‘Thy loving-kindness is better than life.’ There, where others did converse with beasts, there did David converse with God; he was banished from his friends, from the temple, but still he had fellowship with God. So Ps. xc. 1, ‘Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations;’ compare it with the title, and you shall see that psalm was penned by Moses when they were wandering in the wilderness. God’s people, though they have no certain residence, yet they want not a dwelling-place; they find rest, and food, and protection, and room enough in God’s own heart. A christian is everywhere at home but there where he is a stranger to God.

(3.) In case we are burdened with the envy of a strange country; so was Abraham, and so was Isaac. The patriarchs lived a wandering life, but still God was with them; and though they did what they could to avoid envy, yet still they met with it. This may be the case

of persons exiled for religion and a good conscience; they may be driven abroad, and thrive abroad, and there meet with envy and opposition; as the Albigenes, wherever they had land they made it fruitful, which drew troubles upon them, and enforced their frequent removes. In such a case remember, if we have God's favour, no matter for man's envy.

[2.] It is caution to you that have stately houses, you have need look to yourselves that you do not forget heaven. God would have the patriarchs dwell in tents, 'that they might look for a city which hath foundations.' Let not your hearts be taken with earthly things. You have city houses and country houses, houses of profit, pomp, and pleasure; when you walk up and down in them, remember God, to do something for him that hath given you these comforts. And remember those that want such dwellings; Christ himself had not where to lay his head; many of his members, of whom the world is not worthy, have not any settled habitation, and make a hard shift for a short abode, they have no house but the wide world, no bed but the hard ground, and no other canopy than the heavens. And remember heaven—'We look for a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,' 2 Cor. v. 1; not of masons' and carvers' work, but of God's own handiwork. There are field meditations and house meditations. When you walk up and down in your stately houses, you should have these thoughts: Here I am for a while; I know not how soon God may destroy this cedar work by fire, by rough winds, or by the fury of men: Zeph. ii. 14, 'He shall uncover the cedar work.'

[3.] Here is instruction to us not to make a vain ostentation of riches and greatness, that draweth envy. This was one reason why God would have the patriarchs dwell in tents. When men hang out the ensigns of pride and vanity to public view in their costly apparel, pompous buildings, they do but court the envy and robbery of others. God will send the emptiers to empty them, Amos vi. 7. This note principally concerneth strangers that thrive in a foreign land; pomp and ostentation of riches have been fatal to them. I might bring several stories in England and France. The natives think the sap proper to them; when a foreign plant spreadeth in branches, it draweth envy and rage: Gen. xix. 9, 'This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge.' And it concerneth persons of a mean original, advanced to offices, and places of trust and power. And it concerneth ministers, whose maintenance is dependant; they had need be sober in apparel, in household stuff, &c. People are apt to begrudge their portion, and therefore they should less put forth in the eye of the world than others; their thriving has always been an eyesore.

[4.] It exhorteth us to a profession of our hopes and expectations of another world, as the patriarchs did in the midst of the Canaanites; by dwelling in tents 'they declared plainly that they sought a country,' Heb. xi. 14. The rite bindeth not, but we should have a tent-disposition, and set the face of our conversations heavenward, renounce worldly conveniences, live as those that are not ashamed of their country, that we may draw others to be fellow-citizens with us: Phil. ii. 15, 16, 'That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as

lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.' A man should discover his hopes in his language, let it be the language of Canaan; in a mortified course of life, that all the world may see you are of another country. The world is in the dark; as the stars are the shining part of heaven, so the saints, if they live answerably to their condition, they are as stars, the glory of the world; as the stars guided the wise men to Christ, so that is their office to guide to Christ by their conversations. There are greater lights and lesser lights: ministers are as the greater lights to hold forth the word of God in doctrine, christians as the lesser lights to hold forth the word of life in practice. It is a prodigy to see the lights of heaven eclipsed; so to see blackness, darkness, and worldliness in your conversations would be as a prodigy. When your cares, griefs, desires, endeavours are carnal, you suffer an eclipse; you do not shine so brightly to the world, and make such an open profession as those should do that do spiritually live in tents.

[5.] The next duty we learn is moderation in houses and furniture. Abraham and the patriarchs dwelt in tents; we cannot be contented unless we have so many walks, galleries, turrets, pyramids; such setting up and pulling down, transposing and transplacing to make gay houses, and so much yearly spent in costly furniture, that we are much departed from the primitive simplicity. I know God hath given us a liberal allowance to make our pilgrimage comfortable, and that this allowance is straitened and enlarged according to our quality and degree in the world, and that in strength of buildings the safety and glory of a nation is much concerned, and that as nations are civilised, so their buildings are more fair and commodious; but yet there must be a restraint in pomp and excess. The scriptures often take notice of the vanity of sumptuous buildings and household stuff: Amos iii. 15, 'I will smite the winter house and summer house; the houses of ivory shall perish, and the great houses shall have an end.' It is made one of the causes of Israel's judgments: so Amos vi. 8, 'I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces,' and in many other places. Now the limits are, when they exceed our estate, and if not our estate, yet our degree and rank; when they divert our charity;—house-builders are not house-keepers; the walls are double clothed when the poor go naked, and that is spent upon polishing of stones which is due to the members of Christ;—and when men feed their luxury with oppression: Hab. ii. 11, 12, 'For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it. Wo to him that buildeth a town with blood, and stablisheth a city by iniquity!' The stone shall cry, Lord, avenge us against the builder, we were laid in blood; and the beam shall answer, And we were purchased with rapine and public spoil.

[6.] The next thing we learn is self-denial, and enduring hardness for God's sake. Abraham dwelt in tents when God called him thereunto. God hath work for the patriarchs to do up and down the world, and therefore would not have their dwellings settled. So should we learn upon a call to give up all conveniences to God, and to be content with a mean condition; as for instance, when we can no longer keep them with a good conscience, when by particular impulse we are urged to such works as will forfeit our worldly conveniences, and the like.

[7.] It is a check to covetousness, when men seek to root here, and 'to join house to house, and field to field, till there be no place they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth,' Isa. v. 8. This is quite contrary to Abraham, who left all and dwelt in tents; they are still purchasing, till they have engrossed all to themselves, and there be no room for any to dwell by them.

Thirdly, The next circumstance is his fellows and followers in this practice and profession, with Isaac and Jacob, 'the heirs with him of the same promise.' The words will undergo a double sense, they imply imitation or cohabitation.

1. Imitation: they dwelt with them; it implieth likeness of practice; they did it after Abraham's death.

2. Cohabitation: for Abraham was a hundred years old when Isaac was born, and Isaac at sixty years old begat Jacob and Esau; so that Abraham lived with Isaac seventy-five years, and with Jacob fifteen years. Compare Gen. xxi. 5, and xxv. 8, 26. But Abraham and Isaac lived in distinct families when Jacob was born, therefore it is to be understood successively that Isaac dwelt in tents as well as Abraham: Gen. xxvi. 17, 'Isaac pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar;' Gen. xxiv. 67, 'Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent.' And of Jacob it is said: Gen. xxv. 27, 'He was a plain man, dwelling in tents,' in opposition to Esau, who built cities. Therefore Jacob's tents are used proverbially in scripture; see Num. xxiv. 5, Jer. xxx. 18.

[1.] Observe, that saints are of the same spiritual dispositions.

(1.) Because acted by the same spirit: Acts iv. 32, 'And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul.' If it were possible that two bodies were acted by the same soul, they would weep together and rejoice together, and have the same gestures and motions. These old believers were not only united to the same head, but acted by the same spirit; Christ is the head of the church, and the Spirit is as it were the soul of the church.

(2.) They are governed by the same laws: Jer. xxxii. 39, 'I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever.' There are many ways to hell, and but one way to heaven. They are all alike in regard of newness of heart, and there is but one rule of life and worship. Men that will find out new ways to heaven put themselves into the highway to hell; all the saints have trodden this path: Heb. vi. 12, 'Be followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.' They that seek to make the way to heaven more easy will find themselves at last mistaken.

(3.) They have all but one scope, to please God, and to glorify him upon earth. Wicked men differ in their particular scope, though they agree in their hatred of the power of godliness; like Samson's foxes that were tied by their tails, though their heads looked several ways; it is but a faction and conspiracy. But all the saints make this their scope. Many times they differ in judgment, but agree in scope; as two physicians that consult for the cure of a man that is dangerously sick may propose different courses, but both design the recovery of the sick man.

(4.) They are called to the same privileges, they are heirs of the same promise: 2 Peter i. 1, 'To them that have obtained like precious

faith with us;’ as a jewel held by a child and by a man is of the same worth. Jude 3, ‘Beloved, when I gave diligence to write unto you of the common salvation.’

Use 1. It informeth us of the reason of differences in the children of God, partly, because they do not regard the spirit of communion, or mingle with those that have no share in it; partly, because of some partial error about the law and way they ought to walk in; partly, because through corruption they seek their own things, and forget they are called to the same privileges. In practicals, and in the power of godliness, they all agree, and in things necessary to salvation.

Use 2. It presseth us to search whether or no we have the same spirit by which all God’s saints are acted, the same spirit of faith and of holiness, and of self-denial, and of heavenly-mindedness. Do we behave ourselves as heirs of the same promises? Ps. xxxix. 12, ‘I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.’

[2.] Observe the fruit of godly education. Abraham dwelt in tents, and trained up Isaac in the same profession, and Isaac trained up Jacob. This is the way to continue religion in families, to bring up children ‘in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,’ Eph. vi. 4. God reckoneth upon it from those that are faithful; as he saith concerning Abraham, Gen. xviii. 19, ‘For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord.’ Alas! many parents are negligent in this kind, whom in charity we may judge godly. We are careful to leave our children great estates, that they may be rich; but who is careful to leave them thus mortified, to train them up in the contempt of the world; nay, we rather strive to make them worldly. We do not teach them to dwell in tents; all that we care for is that they may not be given to prodigality and excess, that they may not waste what we have scraped up for them; but let them be as worldly as they will, we like that. Plutarch, taxing the abuse of parents that strive to leave their children rich and not virtuous, he saith, They do like those that are solicitous about the shoe, but care not for the foot. Oh, begin with them betimes! Jerome compareth youth to water spilt upon the table; it runneth after you that way which you draw your finger. Train them up to self-denial before their affections are stiffened by long use in the world. The best riches you can leave them is to teach them the art to despise riches, saith Chrysostom in one of his homilies on Timothy.

[3.] Observe the force of example, especially of parents. Abraham lived in tents, and so did Isaac and Jacob. You must not only educate your children, but give them an example; this works more than precepts. Nature is very catching at ill examples, therefore beware of them.

Ver. 10, *For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

Here is the reason rendered of this effect of his faith, his thoughts did not run upon Canaan so much as heaven.

1. Observe, that serious thoughts and hopes of heaven make us to carry ourselves with a loose heart towards worldly comforts. This was the reason why Abraham was contented to be a stranger in Canaan.

1. I shall show you what is this looking.
2. The influence of it on our christian practice.

1. What is this looking for heaven. It is not a blind hope, such as is not advised, and is found in men that are ignorant and presumptuous, that regard not what they do;—the presumption of ignorant persons is a child of darkness. Not some glances upon heaven, such as are found in worldly and sensual persons; such are not operative, they come but now and then, and leave no warmth upon the soul; as fruit is not ripened that hath but a glance of the sun. But it is a serious hope, well built, such as ariseth from grace longing after its own perfection; therefore we are said, ‘to be begotten again to a lively hope,’ 1 Peter i. 3. Seed desireth growth, everything aimeth at perfection; as soon as grace is infused, there is a motion this way. And it is an earnest hope, such as is accompanied with longings and frequent thoughts: Rom. viii. 23, ‘We ourselves groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.’ It is a lively hope, such as stirreth up rejoicing, as if the thing hoped for were already enjoyed: Rom. v. 2, ‘We rejoice in hope of the glory of God;’ as ‘Abraham rejoiced to see Christ’s day, and he saw it, and was glad,’ John viii. 56. And yet it is a patient, contented hope: Rom. viii. 25, ‘If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.’

2. The influence of it. It maketh us strangers in the world; partly, by purging the heart from vile and worldly affections: 1 John iii. 3, ‘He that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure;’ partly, by carrying us within the veil, by which the glory of the world is obscured: 2 Cor. iv. 18, ‘We look not to the things that are seen, but to the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal;’ partly, by counterbalancing our afflictions with the future glory; it sets the joy before us in our sufferings, Heb. xii. 2, and so works a sweet and comfortable carriage in all states and conditions.

Use 1. It showeth us that they do not truly despise the world who despise it merely out of a slightness of disposition, and not out of the sense of glorious hopes; they do not despise the whole world; they are taken not with worldly pleasures, but they mind worldly profits; their corruptions run out another way: this is not to leave the world, but to make choice of it.

Use 2. It informeth us of the reason why the world hath such a power upon us; we do not awaken our hopes, and look for the city to come. We have a blind hope, that is ill built; we have a loose slight hope, that doth not stir up serious thoughts, earnest sighs, hearty groans, and lively tastes of heaven.

2. Observe, heaven is a city. It is so called in opposition to those solitary tents which Abraham and his family pitched in Canaan, and in allusion to those cities which the Canaanites then lived in. There are diverse resemblances betwixt heaven and a city. A city is a civil society that is under government; so is heaven a society of saints, there all believers meet: Heb. xii. 22, 23, ‘Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven.’ Sometimes it is com-

pared to a house where there are many mansions: John xiv. 2, 'In my Father's house are many mansions:' but lest that comparison should straiten our thoughts, it is compared to a city where there is a great deal of company, and Christ is the governor. In cities they live in concord and amity; there is a sweet communion of saints in heaven, other manner of saints than we have here, without weakness and imperfection. A city is a storehouse of good things, as of food and treasure; there is enough in heaven for our complete comfort. A city hath liberties; there we are freed from Satan's tyranny, from the law's curse and condemning power, from all weakness, from all ill company, nothing that defiles shall enter there, from all temptations to sin—'Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God,' Ps. lxxxvii. 3. All that are there speak one language, praising and glorifying God, though in the church here our language is divided. The church is the suburbs of heaven, and we must first live in the suburbs before we come to live in the city: Eph. ii. 19. 'Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.' The church is the seminary of heaven, where we first live and trade into heaven. O you that are citizens! labour to be citizens of heaven: Heb. xiii. 14, 'For we have here no continuing city, but we seek one to come.' And you that are countrymen! seek to get a right to the freedoms of this city; there is an excellent governor, Jesus Christ; excellent company, all the saints that ever have been from the beginning of the world to the end; there is a constant communion with God: Ps. xxvii. 4, 'One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord,' &c. This is the chiefest thing that above all other things we are to care for.

3. Observe, heaven is a city that hath foundations. Tents are moving and ambulatory dwellings, they had no foundations; but this hath foundations, that is, it is a fixed and certain habitation, therefore called 'an abiding city,' Heb. xiii. 14. We cannot have an abiding city in a perishing world. Man must be suited to his happiness, and have a fit place wherein to enjoy it.

1. We are not suited and fitted to happiness while we are here; old bottles will not hold the new wine of glory. Here we are not capable of the glorious presence of God; a mortal creature cannot endure the splendour of it. We would have it here as Peter: Mat. xvii. 4, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here.'

2. The place wherein we live is not a fit place to enjoy it. The world is not a fit place, because it is full of changes,—night and day, calm and tempest, summer and winter. The earth is cursed for our sakes; we cannot have our blessings here; it is a fit place for our punishment and exercise, to be as a stage on which we act a part, or a scaffold on which we are executed, but it is not our city. There is no country of so gentle a temperature as to preserve the inhabitants from all misery, sin, grief, sickness, and death. Heaven then is the only place, it hath foundations, it is the fixed place of our rest and eternal abode. There is hope of quiet, it is a sure blessed place of rest. Here all things are fading—'Time and chance happeneth to all,' Eccles. ix. 11; but the safe commodious dwelling-place is there where we shall

be never molested more. The whole employment of our lives is to seek how to get thither; get a right and interest, and you are sure to enter at death. Christ hath purchased it by his merit, and hath taken possession of it for us.

4. Observe, God is the builder and maker of heaven. It is put in opposition to cities built by men. God made the earth as well as heaven, but the making of heaven is peculiarly ascribed to him because it is a rare piece of work. God hath spent most of his art on it; there he hath fixed his throne: Ps. ciii. 19, 'The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens.' There is most of his majesty seen, there he is fully enjoyed, and there is an everlasting manifestation of his glory. And he that is the maker of it is the disposer of it, please God, and he will give it thee.

5. Observe, that the fathers looked for an entry into this eternal rest after the ending of their pilgrimage. Here is a clear proof of it—'He looked for a city which had foundations, whose builder and maker is God.'

SERMON XLIV.

Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.—HEB. xi. 11.

THE apostle had spoken of the faith of Abraham, and thereupon taketh occasion to mention Sarah's faith. Therefore he saith, *καὶ αὐτῇ Σάρρα*, 'Through faith also Sara herself,' &c.

Observe, what a blessing it is when a husband and wife are both partners of faith, when both in the same yoke draw one way. Abraham is the father of the faithful, and Sara is recommended among believers as having a fellowship in the same promises, and in the same troubles and trials. So it is said of Zachary and Elizabeth: Luke i. 4, 'And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.' It is a mighty encouragement when the constant companion of our lives is also a fellow in the same faith. The hint directeth us in matter of choice, she cannot be a meet help that goeth a contrary way in religion; when the sons of God went in to the daughters of men because they were fair, it brought a flood, Gen. vi. 2, 3. Such mixtures get a mongrel race. Religion decayeth in families by nothing so much as by want of care in matches.

But to come to the words, here is—(1.) The person believing; (2.) The commendation of her faith; (3.) The ground of it.

First, The person believing—*καὶ αὐτῇ Σάρρα*. Yea also Sarah herself, a woman,—and as to the point wherein her faith was exercised, a woman barren and stricken in age,—she through faith received strength to conceive seed.

Obs. A woman weak in sex may be strong in faith. This is a praise