

PSALM 119, VERSE 19.

"I am a Stranger in the earth."

The character which the Psalmist here appropriates to himself, is a character in which every son of Adam appears and acts upon the stage of life. We have a home, but that home is in Heaven. We are strangers in the earth; we are here in a foreign land, through which we are travelling to our native country, there to possess everlasting habitations. Saint Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews, after having celebrated the Old Testament worthies, and the wonders which they had wrought, through the divine principle that was in them, sums up the account in the following words:—"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.—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." Agreeably to this account, if we look into the history of these friends and favorites of Heaven, the ancestors of the Israelitish nation, we find them sojourning in a land that was not theirs; dwelling in tents soon pitched, and as soon removed again; having no ground of their own to set their foot upon, save only a possession of a burying place, and that purchased of the inhabitants, where they might rest from their travels, until they shall pass, at the resurrection of the just, to their durable inheritance in the Kingdom of God. Such were Jacob's views of human life, in answer to the Egyptian monarch who had enquired his age; "The days of the years of my pilgrimage," says the patriarch, "are an hundred and thirty years; few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers, in the days of their pilgrimage." Look, my brethren, at the posterity of Jacob, the chosen people of the Most High, after they had been delivered from the house of bondage; view them also dwelling in tents, sojourning for forty years, in a vast and dreary wilderness; attacked by enemies, stung by serpents, and in danger of perishing for want of provisions; but still supported by the hand of Providence, and at length conducted to the land of Promise! Consider, my fellow Christians, this history, and in it behold your pictured life! When the Children of Israel had taken possession of Canaan, they might be said, in some sense, to have obtained a settlement; but in truth and propriety, what settlement can any man be said to have obtained, to whom will soon, and no one knows how soon, be brought the message that was brought to Hezekiah, "Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die and not live." This was the case with the Israelites, both before and after their settlement in Canaan; notwithstanding, therefore, the rest which God had there given them, we find the Psalmist speaking of another and distant rest still remain-

ing for the people of God, in another and better country, that is, a Heavenly one; and, accordingly, although settled in the promised land, you hear him still crying out in the words of the text, "I am a stranger in the earth." Let us, therefore, take this for our ground, that life is a journey, and man a traveller; and let us consider what manner of persons, upon this principle, we ought to be.

In the first place, then, wherever a traveller may be journeying, his heart is still at home. Nothing can wear his affections, for any length of time, from his country, his home, and his family, to which he is returning. The spirit of man is not a native of this lower world. It came originally from above; and, upon the dissolution of the body, it will return to God who gave it, to its own native country, to the house and family of its Heavenly Father. These, then, are the objects that will always employ our thoughts, if once we are accustomed to regard ourselves as strangers and sojourners upon earth. The end of our journey will always be the uppermost in our minds, according to the precepts delivered in the scriptures, and the examples afforded us by the prophets and apostles:—"Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. Seek those things that are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. My soul hath a desire and longing to enter into the courts of the Lord; when shall I come and appear before God? I desire to depart, and to be with Christ. Let us go forth, bearing our reproach; for here we have no continuing city, but seek one to come." These are the desires and expressions of men like ourselves, encompassed with the same infirmities; and if they are not ours, the reason is, because we mistake or forget our real condition in this present world; we consider ourselves at home, when, in fact, we are abroad and upon a journey. But, although the traveller's first and chief delight is the recollection of his home, which lies as a cordial at his heart, (and refreshes him everywhere, and at all times and seasons) yet this does not, by any means, prevent him

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