

THE
FAREWELL SERMON

OF
RICHARD BAXTER;

PREPARED TO HAVE BEEN PREACHED TO HIS HEARERS

AT KIDDERMINSTER

AT HIS DEPARTURE, BUT FORBIDDEN.

TO THE
INHABITANTS
OF THE
BOROUGH AND FOREIGN OF KIDDERMINSTER,
IN
THE COUNTY OF WORCESTER.

DEAR FRIENDS,

WHILE I was lately turning up the rubbish of my old papers, I found this sermon in the bottom, which I had quite forgotten that I kept, but thought it had been cast away with many hundred others. Much of the last sheet was added to the sermon after I came from you; and I remember that when I intended to send you this sermon as my farewell, I durst not then have so much converse with you, for your own sakes, lest it should raise more enmity against you, and your displeasing circumstances of religious practice should be said to come from my continued counsels to you.

I have lately taken my farewell of the world, in a book which I called 'My Dying Thoughts: ' my pain of body and debility increasing, and my flesh being grown to me more grievous than all my enemies or outward troubles. I remembered the benefit I often received upon your prayers; and craving the continuance of them, till you hear of my dissolution, therewith I send this, as my special farewell to yourselves, whom I am bound to remember with more than ordinary love and thankfulness, while I am

RICHARD BAXTER.

BAXTER'S FAREWELL SERMON.

JOHN xvi. 22.

And ye now, therefore, have sorrow ; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

MY DEARLY BELOVED IN OUR DEAREST LORD,

I WILL so far consent to your troubled thoughts of this unwelcome day, as to confess that to me, as well as you, it somewhat resembleth the day of death. 1. Death is the separation of the dearest consorts, soul and body ; and how near the union is betwixt us, both that of relation, and that of affection, which must admit this day of some kind of dissolution, I will rather tell to strangers than to you. 2. Death is unwelcome both to soul and body of itself (though it destroy not the soul, it doth the body.) So dear companions part not willingly. Your hearts and minds are here so over-forward in the application, that words may be well spared, where sense hath taken so deep possession. 3. Death is the end of human converse here on earth. We must see and talk with our friends here no more. And this our separation is like to end that converse between you and me, which formerly we have had in the duties of our relations. We must no more go up together, as formerly, to the house of God ; I must no more speak to you publicly in his name, nor solace my own soul, in opening to you the gospel of salvation, nor in the mention of his covenant, his grace, or kingdom. Those souls that have not been convinced and converted, are never like to hear more from me for their conviction or conversion. I have finished all the instruction, reproof, exhortation, and persuasion, which ever I must use, in order to their salvation. I must speak here no more to inform the ignorant, to reform the wicked, to reduce the erroneous, to search the hypocrite, to humble the proud, to bow the obstinate, or to bring the worldly, the impenitent, and ungodly to the knowledge of the word, themselves, and God. I must speak no more to strengthen the weak, to comfort the afflicted, nor to

build you up in faith and holiness. Our day is past; our night is come, when we cannot work as formerly we have done! My opportunities here are at an end. 4. Death is the end of earthly comforts, and our separation is like to be the end of that comfortable communion, which God for many years hath granted us. Our public and private communion hath been sweet to us. The Lord hath been our pastor, and hath not suffered us to want. He made us lie down in his pleasant pastures, and hath led us by the silent streams! (Psalm xxiii. 1, 2.) He restored our souls, and his very rod and staff did comfort us, but his smiting and scattering time is come. These pleasures now are at an end. 5. Death is the end of human labours, there is no ploughing or sowing, no building or planting in the grave. And so doth our separation end the works of our mutual relation in this place. 6. Death is the effect of painful sickness, and usually of the folly, intemperance, or oversight of ourselves. And, though our conscience reproach us not with gross unfaithfulness, yet are our failings so many, and so great, as force us to justify the severity of our Father, and to confess that we deserve this rod. Though we have been censured by the world as being over-strict, and doing too much for the saving of our own and others' souls, yet it is another kind of charge that conscience hath against us. How earnestly do we now wish that we had done much more; that I had preached more fervently, and you had heard more diligently, and we had all obeyed God more strictly, and done more, for the souls of the ignorant, careless, hardened sinners that were among us! It is just with God that so dull a preacher should be put to silence, that could ever speak without tears and fervent importunity to impenitent sinners, when he knew that it was for no less than the saving of their souls, and foresaw the joys which they would lose, and the torment which they must endure, if they repented not. With what shame and sorrow do I now look back upon the cold and lifeless sermons which I preached; and upon those years' neglect of the duty of private instructing of your families, before we set upon it orderly and constantly. Our destruction is of ourselves! Our undervaluings and neglects have forfeited our opportunities. As good Melancthon was wont to say, '*In vulneribus nostris proprias agnoscimus pennas.*' The arrow that woundeth us, was feathered from our own wings. 7. Death useth to put surviving friends into a dark and mourning habit. Their lamentations are the chief part of funeral solemnities. And in this also we have our part. The compassion of condolers

is greater than we desire, for sorrow is apt to grow unruly, and exceed its bounds, and bring on more sufferings by lamenting one, and also to look too much at the instruments, and to be more offended at them than at our sins. 8. But death is the end of all the living. The mourners also must come after us, and, alas! how soon! It maketh our fall more grievous to us, to foresee how many must ere long come down! How many hundred pastors must shortly be separated from their flocks. If there were no epidemical malady to destroy us, our ministry hath its mortality. Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever? (Zech. i. 5.) This made us the more importunate with you in our ministry, because we knew that we must preach to you, and pray with you, and instruct you, and watch over you, but a little while. Though we knew not what instrument death would use, we knew our final day was coming, when we must preach, and exhort, and pray our last with you! We knew that it behoved us to work while it was day (and, oh, that we had done it better!) because the night was coming when none could work. (John ix. 4.) 9. And as it is appointed to all men once to die, so after death there followeth judgment. And we also have our further judgment to undergo. We must expect our hour of temptation. We must be judged by men, as well as chastened by God. We must prepare to bear the reproach and slanders of malicious tongues, and the unrighteous censures of those that know us not, and of those who think it their interest to condemn us. And we must also call ourselves to judgment. We are like to have unwelcome leisure, to review the days and duties which are past. It will then be time for us to call ourselves to account of our preaching and studies, and other ministerial works, and to sentence our labours and our lives, and it will be time for you to call yourselves to account of your hearing and profiting, and to ask, 'How have we used the mercies which are taken from us?' Yea, God himself will judge us according to our works. He will not justify us, if we have been unfaithful in our little, and have been such as Satan and his instruments, the accusers of the brethren, do report us. But if we have been faithful, we may expect his double justification. 1. By pardon he will justify us from our sins. 2. By plea and righteous sentence, he will justify us against the false accusations of our enemies, and that is enough. How small a thing should it seem to us, to be judged of man, who must stand or fall to the final sentence of the Almighty God. 10. The separated soul and body do retain

their relations, and the soul its inclination to a re-union with its body. And though our nearest obligations may be now dissolved, and the exercise of our communion hindered, yet I know we shall never forget each other, nor shall the bond of love which doth unite us, be ever loosed and made void. And so much of our relation shall still continue, as intimated in those texts, 1 Cor. iv. 15, 16, xii. 14; Phil. iv. 1, &c. 11. And the power of death will not be everlasting, a resurrection and re-union there will be at last, but whether in this world, I cannot prophesy. I am apter to think that most of us must die in the wilderness, and that our night must bear some proportion with our day. But things unrevealed belong only unto God. It sufficeth me to be sure of this, that as our kingdom, so our comforts are not of this world, and that as Christ, so his servants under him, may say, "Behold I and the children which God hath given me, (Heb. ii. 13,) and that we shall present you as chaste virgins unto Christ." (2 Cor. xi. 2.) "And therefore we have preached, taught, and warned, that we might present you perfect in Christ Jesus." (Col. i. 28.) "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing, are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and our joy." (1 Thess. ii. 19, 20.)

But yet the resemblance between death and this our separation, holdeth not in all things. 1. It is not I, nor any pastor, that is the church's soul or life. This is the honour of Christ, the Head. Being planted into him, you may live, though all his ministers were dead, or all your teachers driven into corners. (Isa. xxx. 20.) 2. The continuance of your church state dependeth not on the continuance of any one single pastor whatsoever. God can provide you others to succeed us, that may do his work for you more successfully than we. And could I but hope that they should be as able, and holy, and diligent as I desire, how little should I partake with you in this day's sorrows. Had I not given you these exceptions, malicious tongues would have reported that I made myself your life or soul, and take the churches to be all dead, when such as I are silenced and cast out. But I remember Psalm xii.

Though what I have said, and what you feel, may make you think that a funeral sermon is most seasonable on such a day, yet I have rather chosen to preach to you the doctrine of rejoicing, because you sorrow not as men that have no hope, and because I must consider what tendeth most to your strength and steadfastness; and that you may see herein I imitate our

Lord, I have chosen his words to his troubled disciples, before his departure from them. (John xvi. 22.) And though I make no question but it will be said with scorn, that thus I make myself as Christ, and that I seditiously encourage you by the expectations of my restitution, yet will I not therefore forbear to use my Saviour's consolatory words, but will remember to whom, and on what occasion, he said, "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone; they be blind leaders of the blind; and if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." (Matt. xv. 13, 14.)

The words are Christ's comforts to his orphans, sorrowful disciples, expressing first, their present condition, and that which they were now to taste of, and secondly, their future state. Their present case is a state of sorrow, because that Christ must be taken from them. Their future case will be a state of joy, which is expressed, 1. In the futurity of the cause, "but I will see you again." 2. In the promise of the effect, "and your heart shall rejoice." 3. In the duration and invincibility of it, "and your joy no man taketh from you," or "shall take from you." He had before likened their sorrows on this occasion, to the pains of a woman in her child-bearing, which is but short, and endeth in joy. And in relation to that similitude, the Syriac translatheth *λίσθη*, 'sickness,' and the Persian translatheth it 'calamity.' Some expositors limit the cause of their sorrows to the absence of Christ, or that death of his which will for a time both shake their faith, and astonish their hopes, and deprive them of their former comforts. And others limit the word 'therefore' to the following crosses or sufferings which they must undergo for the sake of Christ, and accordingly they interpret the cause of their succeeding joy. But I see no reason but both are included in the text, but principally the first, and the other consequently. As if he had said, 'When you see me crucified, your hearts and hopes will begin to fail, and sorrow to overwhelm your minds, and you will be exposed to the fury of the unbelieving world; but it will be but for a moment, for when you see that I am risen again, your joy will be revived, and my Spirit afterwards, and continual encouragements shall greatly increase and perpetuate your joys, which no persecutions or sufferings shall deprive you of, but they shall at last be perfected in the heavenly everlasting joys.' The cause of their sorrow is first his absence, and next their sufferings with him in the world, when the bridegroom is taken from them they must fast, that is, live an afflicted kind of life in

various sorrows; and the causes of their succeeding joy, are first, his resurrection, and next his Spirit, which is their comforter, and lastly, the presence of his glory at their reception into his glorious kingdom. Their sorrow was to be short, as that of a woman in travail, and it was to have a tendency to their joy. And their joy was to be sure and near, "I will see you again," and great, "your heart shall rejoice," and everlasting, "your joy no man taketh from you."

The sense of the text is contained in these six doctrinal propositions.

Doct. 1. Sorrow goeth before joy with Christ's disciples.

Doct. 2. Christ's death and departure was the cause of his disciples' sorrows.

Doct. 3. The sorrows of Christ's disciples are but short. It is but 'now.'

Doct. 4. Christ will again visit his sorrowful disciples, though at the present he seem to be taken from them.

Doct. 5. When Christ returneth or appeareth to his disciples, their sorrows will be turned into joy.

Doct. 6. The joy of Christians in the return or re-appearing of their Lord is such as no man shall take from them.

Of these, by God's assistance, I shall speak in order, and therefore be but short on each.

Doct. 1. Sorrow goeth before joy with Christ's disciples.

The evening and the morning make their day. They must sow in tears before they reap in joy. They must have trouble in the world, and peace in Christ. God will first dwell in the contrite heart, to prepare it to dwell with him in glory. The pains of travail must go before the joy of the beloved birth.

Quest. What kind of sorrow is it that goeth before our joy?

Ans. 1. There is a sorrow positively sinful, which doth, but should not, go before our joy. Though this be not meant directly in the text, yet it is too constant a foregoer of our comforts. It is not the joys of innocency that are our portion, but the joys of restoration; and the pains of our disease go before the ease and comfort of our recovery. We have our worldly sorrows, and our passionate and peevish sorrows, like Jonah's for the withering of his gourd. According to the degree of our remaining corruption, we have our sorrows, which must be sorrowed for again. Sometimes we are troubled at the providences of God, and sometimes at the dealings of men; at the words or doings of enemies, of friends, of all about us. We are grieved if we have not what we would have, and when we

have it, it becomes our greater grief: nothing well pleaseth us, till we so devote ourselves to please our God, as to be pleased in the pleasing of him.

2. And we have our sorrows, which are sinful through our weakness and imperfection, when, through the languishing feebleness of our souls, we are overmuch troubled at that which we may lawfully sorrow for with moderation; when impatience causeth us to make a greater matter of our afflictions than we ought. If God do but try us with wants or crosses; if we lose our friends, or if they prove unkind; we double the weight of the cross by our impatience. This cometh from the remnants of unmortified selfishness, carnality, and overloving earthly things. Were they less loved, they would be less sorrowed for. If we had seen their vanity, and mortification had made them nothing to us, we should then part with them as with vanity and nothing. It is seldom that God or men afflict us, but we therefore afflict ourselves much more. As the destruction of the wicked, so the troubles of the godly is chiefly of themselves.

3. There is a mere natural suffering or sorrow, which is neither morally good or bad. As to be weary with our labour, to be pained with our diseases; to be sensible of hunger and thirst, of cold and heat; to be averse to death as death, as Christ himself was; and at last to undergo it, and lie down in the dust. There are many sorrows which are the fruits of sin, which yet, in themselves, are neither sin nor duty.

4. There are castigatory sorrows from the hand of God, which have a tendency to our cure, if we use them according to his appointment. Such are all the foresaid natural sufferings, considered as God's means and instruments of our benefit. He woundeth the body to heal the soul: he lanceth the sore, to let out the corruption: he letteth us bleed to cure our inflammations and apostemated parts. He chasteneth all that he loveth and receiveth; (Heb. xii. 1—14;) and we must be subject to a chastening Father if we will live; for he doth it for our profit, "that we may be partakers of his holiness."

5. There are honourable and gainful sufferings from blind malicious wicked men, for the cause of Christ and righteousness, such as the gospel frequently warneth believers to expect. These are the sorrows that have the promises of fullest joy, not that the mere suffering in itself is acceptable to God; but the love which is manifested by suffering for him, is that which he cannot but accept: so that the same measure of sufferings are more or less acceptable, as there is more or less love to God

expressed by them, and as the honour of Christ is more or less intended in them. For to give the body to be burned without love will profit us nothing. But when the cause is Christ's, and the heart intendeth him as the end of the suffering, (1 Cor. xiii. 3,) then "blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," &c. (Matt. v.10—12.)

6. There are penitential and medicinal sufferings, for the killing of sin, and helping on the work of grace, which are made our duty. In the former we are to be but submissive patients, but in these we must be obedient agents, and must inflict them on ourselves. Such are the sorrows of contrition and true repentance; the exercises of fasting, abstinence, and humiliation; the grief of the soul for God's displeasure, for the hiding of his face, and the abatement of his graces in us; and all the works of mortifying self-denial, and forbearing all forbidden pleasures which God doth call his servants to, though in the primitive and principal part of holiness there is nothing but what is sweet and pleasant to a soul, so far as it is holy: (as the love of God and the love of others, and worshipping God, and doing good, and joy, and thanks, and praise, and obedience, &c.) Yet the medicinal parts of grace, or holiness, have something necessarily in them that is bitter, even to nature as nature, and not only as corrupt, such as are contrition, self-denial, mortification, abstinence, as aforesaid.

7. There are charitable sorrows for the dishonour of God, and for the sin, hurt, and miseries of others. These, also, are our duties, and we must be agents in them as well as patients. As we must first pray for the hallowing of the name of God, and the coming of his kingdom, and the doing of his will on earth as it is done in heaven; so we must most grieve for the abuse and dishonour of God's name, the hindering of his kingdom, and the breaking of his laws; that so many nations see not the peril, and know not God, and have not the gospel, or will not receive it, but live in rebellion against their Maker, and in blindness, obstinacy, and hardness of heart, and are given up to commit uncleanness with greediness; (Eph. iv. 18, 19;) that so many nations which are called Christians, are captivated in ignorance and superstition, by the blindness, pride, carnality, and covetousness of their usurping, self-obtruding guides; that so many men professing Christianity have so little of the knowledge or power of what they generally and ignorantly profess, and live to the shame of their profession, the great dishonour

and displeasure of their Lord, and the grief or hardening of others; that the church of Christ is broken into so many sects and factions, possessed with such an uncharitable, destroying zeal against each other, and persecuting their brethren as cruelly as Turks and heathens do; that the best of Christians are so few, and yet so weak and liable to miscarriages. All these are the matter of that sorrow which God hath made our duty; and all these sorts of sorrow do go before a Christian's fullest joy.

Reason 1. God will have some conformity between the order of nature and of grace. Non-entity was before created entity; the evening before morning; infancy before maturity of age; weakness before strength; the buried seed before the plant, the flower, and fruit; and infants cry before they laugh; weakness is soon hurt, and very querulous. No wonder, then, if our sorrows go before our joys.

2. Sin goeth before grace, and therefore our sorrows are before our joys. The seed is first fruitful which was first sown. Joy, indeed, hath the elder parent, *in esse reali et absoluto*, but not *in esse causali et relativo*. We are the children of the first Adam, before we are children of the second; we are born flesh of flesh, before we are born spiritual of the Spirit. (1 Cor. xv.; John iii. 6.) And where Satan goeth before Christ, it is equal that sorrow be before joy.

3. Our gracious Father and wise Physician doth see that this is the fittest method for our cure. That we may deny ourselves, we must know how little we are beholden to ourselves, and must smart by the fruit of our sin and folly before we are eased by the fruit of love and grace. It is the property of the flesh to judge by sense, and therefore sense shall help to mortify it. The frowns of the world shall be an antidote against its flatteries. It killeth by pleasing, and therefore it may help our cure by displeasing us. Loving it is men's undoing; and hurting us is the way to keep us from overloving it. These wholesome sorrows do greatly disable our most dangerous temptations, and preserve us from the pernicious poison of prosperity. They rouse us up when we are lazy and ready to sit down; they awake us when we are ready to fall asleep; they drive us to God when we are ready to forget him, and dote upon a deceiver; they teach us part of the meaning of the gospel; without them we know not well what "a Saviour," a "promise," a "pardon," "grace," and many other gospel terms, do signify. They teach us to pray, and teach us to hear and read with understanding;

they tell us the value of all our mercies, and teach us the use of all the means of grace. They are needful to fix our flashy, light, inconstant minds, which are apt to be gazing upon every bait, and to be touching or tasting the forbidden fruit; and to be taken with those things which we had lately cast behind our backs, till medicinal sorrow doth awake our reason, and make us see the folly of our dreams. Yea, if sorrow check us not, and make us wise, we are ready to lay by our grace and wit, and to follow any goblin in the dark, and, like men bewitched, to be deceived by we know not what, and to go on as a bird to the fowler's snare, as an ox to the slaughter, and as a fool to the correction of the stocks. (Prov. vii. 22, 23.)

4. Moreover precedent sorrows, will raise the price of following joys. They will make us more desirous of the day of our deliverance, and will make it the welcomer to us when it comes. Heaven will be seasonable after a life of so much trouble; and they that come out of great tribulation, will joyfully sing the praises of their Redeemer. (Rev. vii. 14.)

5. And God will have the members conformed to their Head; (Luke xiv. 28, 33;) this was Christ's method, and it must be our's; (Rom. viii. 17, 18;) we must take up the cross, and follow him, if ever we will have the crown; and we must suffer with him if we will be glorified with him. (2 Tim. ii. 12.) Though the will of God be the reason which alone should satisfy his creatures, yet these reasons show you the equity and goodness of his ways.

Use 1. If sorrow before joy be God's ordinary method of dealing with his most beloved servants, learn hence to understand the importance of your sorrows! You say as Baruch, "Wo is me now; for the Lord hath added grief to my sorrow. I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest." (Jer. xlv. 3.) You are ingenious in recounting and aggravating your afflictions. But are you as ingenious in expounding them aright; do you not judge of them rather by your present sense, than by their use and tendency? You will not do so by the bitterness of a medicine, or the working of a purge or vomit. You will like it best when it worketh in that way as usually it doth with them that cureth. And should you not be glad to find that God taketh that way with you, which he most usually takes with those that he saveth. Sure you do not set light by the love of God. Why, then, do you complain so much against the signs and products of it? Is it not because you have yet much

unbelief, and judge of God's love as the flesh directeth you, instead of judging by the effects and prognostics which he himself hath bid you judge by? We will grant to the flesh, that no chastisement for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous; if you will believe the Spirit that, nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby; and that "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." (Heb. xii. 6, 11.) Misunderstand not, then, the prognostics of your present sorrows. Think how they will work as well as how they taste. They bode good, though they are unpleasant. If you were bastards and reprobates you might feel less of the rod. When the ploughers make furrows on you, it prepareth you for the seed; and the showers that water it prognosticate a plenteous harvest. Think it not strange if he thresh and grind you, if you would be bread for your Master's use. He is not drowning his sheep when he washeth them, nor killing them when he is shearing them. But by this he showeth that they are his own: and the new-shorn sheep do most visibly bear his name or mark; when it is almost worn out, and scarce discernible, on them that have the longest fleece. If you love the world and prosperity best, rejoice most in it, and grieve most for the want of it. But if you love God best, and take him for your part and treasure, rejoice in him, and in that condition which hath the fullest significations of his love, and grieve most for his displeasure, and for that condition which either signifieth it, or most enticeth you to displease him. (2 Cor. iv. 18; Matt. vi. 20, 21.) If things present be your portion, then seek them first, and rejoice in them, and mourn when they are taken from you. (Col. iii. 1—4.) But if really your portion be above with Christ, let your hearts be there; and let your joys and sorrows and endeavours signify it. The sense of brutes doth judge of pain and pleasure only by their present feeling; but the reason of a man, and the faith of a Christian, do estimate them according to their signification and importance. I know that it is in vain to think by reason to reconcile the flesh and sense unto its sufferings: but if I may speak to you as to men, much more if as to Christians, and reason with your reasonable part, I shall not at all despair of the success.

Quest. 1. Tell me, then, who it is that you suffer by; that hath the principal disposing hand in all? Is it one that you can reasonably suspect of any want of power, wisdom, or good-

ness? Is he not much fitter to dispose of you, than you or any mortals are? If the physician be better than the patient, to determine how he shall be ordered, and if you are fitter than your infant child, and if you are fitter than your beast, to determine of his pasture, work, and usage, sure then you will grant, that God is much more fit than we. And if he would give you your choice and say, 'It shall go with thee all thy days, for prosperity or adversity, life or death, as thou wilt thyself, or as thy dearest friend will;' you should say, 'Nay, Lord, but let it be as thou wilt; for I and my friend are foolish and partial, and know not what is best for ourselves. Not our wills, but thy will be done.'

Quest. 2. Do you not see that carnal pleasure is far more dangerous than all your sorrows? Look on the ungodly that prosper in the world, and tell me whether you would be in their condition? If not, why do you long for their temptations; and to live in that air whose corruption causeth such epidemical mortalities? If you would not with the rich man, (Luke xvi.) be damned for sensuality, nor with the fool, (Luke xii. 19, 20,) say, Soul, take thy ease, &c. when your souls are presently to be taken from you; or with him, (Luke xviii. 22, 23,) go away sorrowful from Christ; desire not the temptations which brought them to it. If you would not oppress the people of God with Pharaoh, nor persecute the prophets with Ahab and Jezebel, nor resist the gospel, and persecute the preachers of it with the Scribes and Pharisees; (2 Thess. xiv. 15, 16;) desire not the temptations which led them to all this.

Quest. 3. Would not you follow your Saviour, and rather be conformed to him and to his saints, than to the wicked that have their portion in this life? I doubt you do not well study the life and sufferings of Christ, and the reason of them; when you find yourselves so little concerned in them, and so desirous of another way. And would you not go to heaven in the common way that the saints of old have gone before you in? Read the Scripture and all church history, and observe which is the beaten path of life; and whether even among believers and the pastors of the church, it was the persecuted or the prosperous that most honoured their profession, and which of them it was that corrupted the church with pride and domination, and kindled in it those flames of contention which are consuming it to this day; and sowed those seeds of divisions whose sour fruit have set their children's teeth on edge. Mark whether it was

the suffering or the prospering part that hath had the greatest hand in her after-sufferings.

Quest. 4. What saith your own experience, and how hath God dealt with you in the time that is past? Hath not your suffering done you good? If it have not, you may thank yourselves: for I am sure God's rod hath a healing virtue, and others have received a cure by it. How much is mankind beholden to the cross! When David went weeping up mount Olivet, he was in a safer case than when he was gazing on Bathsheba from his battlements. And when Christ was sweating blood upon mount Olivet, (Luke xxii. 44,) it was a sign that man's redemption was in hand: and when he was bleeding on the cross, and drinking vinegar and gall, it was almost finished. And if the cross hath borne such happy fruit, what reason have we to be so much against it? If it have proved good for you that you were afflicted, and no part of your lives have been more fruitful, why should your desires so much contradict your own experience? If bitter things have proved the most wholesome, and a full and luscious diet hath caused your disease, what need you more, to direct your judgment, if you will judge as men, and not as brutes?

Obj. But (you will say) it is not all sorrow that foretellet joy: some pass from sorrow unto greater sorrow. How then shall we know whether our sorrows tend to worse or unto better?

Answ. It is true that there are sorrows which have no such promise, as these have in the text. As, 1. The mere vindictive punishment of the wicked. 2. The sinful sorrows which men keep up in themselves; proceeding from their sinful love of creatures. 3. And the corrections which are not improved by us to our amendment and reformation.

But the promise belongeth, 1. To those sorrows which in sincerity we undergo for the sake of Christ and righteousness. 2. To those sorrows which we ourselves perform as duties, either for the dishonour of God, or the sins or miseries of others; or our penitential sorrows for our own offences. 3. And to those sorrows of chastisement which we patiently submit to, and improve to a true amendment of our hearts and lives. For though sin be the material cause, or the meritorious cause, yet love which maketh reformation the effect, will also make the end to be our comfort.

Use 2. If this be God's method, condemn not then the gene-

ration of the just, because you see them undermost in the world, and suffer more than other men. Think it not a dishonour to them to be in poverty, prisons, banishment, or reproach, unless it be for a truly dishonourable cause. Call not men miserable, for that which God maketh the token of his love, and the prognostic of their joy. Methinks he that hath once read the Psalms xxxvii. and lxxiii.; and Matt. v. 10—12; and Job xiii. and xv.; and 2 Thess. i., and well believeth them, should never err this old condemned error any more. And yet it is common among carnal men, to do as some beasts do; when one of their fellows is wounded, they all forsake him: so these stand looking with pity, or fear, or strangeness upon a man that is under sufferings and slanders, as if it must needs be a deserved thing; and think it a great dishonour to a man, how innocent soever, when they hear that he is used as offenders and malefactors are; forgetting how by this they condemn their Saviour, and all his apostles and martyrs, and the wisest, best, and happiest men that the earth hath borne. And all this is but the blind and hasty judgment of sense and unbelief, which hath neither the wit to judge by the word of God, nor yet the patience to stay the end, and see how the sorrows of the godly will conclude, and where the triumph of the hypocrite will leave them.

And yet some there be that are apt to err on the other extreme, and to think that every man is happy that is afflicted, and that such have all their sorrow in this life; and that the suffering party is always in the right, and therefore they are ready to fall in with any deluded sect, which they see to be under reproach and suffering. But the cause must be first known, before the suffering can be well judged of.

Doct. 2. Christ's death and departure was the cause of his disciples' sorrows.

This is plain in the words "Ye now therefore have sorrow; but I will see you again." And the causes of this sorrow were these three conjunct: 1. That their dear Lord, whom they loved, and whom they had heard, and followed, and put their trust in, must now be taken from them. If the parting of friends at death do turn our garments into the signs of our sad and mournful hearts, and cause us to dwell in the houses of mourning, we must allow Christ's disciples some such affections, upon their parting with their Lord.

2. And the manner of his death, no doubt, did much increase their sorrows. That the most innocent should suffer as a re-

puted malefactor, that he that more contemned the wealth and pleasures and glory of the world, than ever man did, and chose a poor, inferior life, and would not have a kingdom of this world, and never failed in any duty to high or low, should yet be hanged ignominiously on a cross, as one that was about to usurp the crown! That deluded sinners should put to death the Lord of life, and spit in the face of such a majesty, and hasten destruction to their nation and themselves; and that all Christ's disciples must thus be esteemed the followers of a crucified usurper, judge if we had been in their case ourselves, whether this would have been matter of sorrow to us or not. Had it not been enough for Christ to have suffered the pain, but he must also suffer the dishonour, even the imputation of sin, which no man was so far from being guilty of? and of that particular sin, usurpation of dominion, and treason against Cæsar, which his heart and life were as contrary to, as light to darkness? And was it not enough for Christians to suffer so great calamities of bodies for righteousness' sake, but they must also suffer the reproach of being the seditious followers of a crucified malefactor whom they would have made a king? No! our Lord would stoop to the lowest condition for our sakes, which was consistent with his innocency and perfection! Sin is so much worse than suffering, that we may take this for the greatest part of his condescension, and strangest expression of his love, that he should take not only the nature and the sufferings of a man, but also the nature and the imputation of sinners. Though sin itself was inconsistent with his perfection, yet so was not the false accusation and imputation of it: he could not become a sinner for us; but he could be reputed a sinner for us, and die as such. And when our Lord hath submitted to this most ignominious kind of suffering, it is not fit that we should be the choosers of our sufferings, and say, Lord, we will suffer any thing except the reputation of being offenders, and the false accusations of malicious men! If in this we must be made conformable to our Head, we must not refuse it, nor repine at his disposal of us.

3. And their sorrow for Christ's departure was the greater, because they had so little foresight of his resurrection and return. It is strange to see how dark they were in these articles of the faith, for all their long converse with Christ, and his plain foretelling them his death and resurrection: and how much of their teaching Christ reserved to the Spirit after his departure

from them. "Then took he unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished: for he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked and spitefully entreated, and spit upon, and they shall scourge him and put him to death, and the third day he shall rise again." (John xii. 16; Luke xviii. 31—34.) And they understood none of these things, and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken. Had they known all that would follow, and clearly foreseen his resurrection and his glory, they would then have been troubled the less for his death, but when they saw him die, and foresaw him not revive, and rise, and reign, then did their hearts begin to fail them, and they said, "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel." (Luke xxiv. 21.) Even as we use to lament immoderately, when we lay the bodies of our friends in the grave, because we see not whither the soul is gone, nor in what triumph and joy it is received unto Christ; which if we saw it would moderate our griefs. And even so we over pity ourselves and our friends in our temporal sufferings, because we see not whither they tend and what will follow them. We see Job on the dunghill, but look not so far as his restoration, "Behold we count them happy which endure: ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy." (Jam. v. 11.) There is no judging by the present, but either by staying [for] the end, or believing God's predictions of it.

Use. It is allowable in Christ's disciples to grieve (in faith and moderately) for any departure of his from them; they that have had the comfort of communion with him in a life of faith and grace, must needs lament any loss of that communion; it is sad with such a soul, when Christ seemeth strange, or when they pray and seek, and seem not to be heard! It is sad with a believer when he must say, 'I had once access to the Father by the Son; I had helps in prayer, and I had the lively operations of the Spirit of grace, and some of the joy of the Holy Ghost, but now, alas, it is not so.' And they that have had experience of the fruit and comfort of his word, and ordinances, and discipline, and the communion of saints, may be allowed to lament the loss of this, if he take it from them. It was no unseemly thing in David, when he was driven from the tabernacle of God, to make that lamentation, "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks,

so panteth my soul after thee, O God ; my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God ; when shall I come and appear before God ? My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God ? O my God, my soul is cast down within me," &c. (Psalm xlii. and xliii.) And, "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord ; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God ; yea, the sparrow hath found a house, and the swallow a nest," &c. "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house ; they will be still praising thee. For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand ; I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." (Psalm lxxxiv. 2—4.) It signifieth ill when men can easily let Christ go, or lose his word, or helps, and ordinances. When sin provoketh him to hide his face, and withdraw his mercies, if we can senselessly let them go, it is a contempt which provoketh him much more. If we are indifferent what he giveth us, it is just with him to be indifferent too, and to set as little by our helps and happiness, as we set by them ourselves. But we little know the misery which such contempt prepareth for : "Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee, lest I make thee desolate ; a land not inhabited." (Jer. vi. 8.) "Yea, wo also unto them when I depart from them." (Hos. ix. 12.) When God goeth, all goeth ; grace and peace, help and hope, and all that is good and comfortable is gone, when God is gone. Wonder not, therefore, if holy souls cry after God, and fear the loss of his grace and ordinances ; and if they lament the loss of that, which dead-hearted sensualists are weary of, (Luke viii. 47,) and would drive away ; it will be the damning sentence, (Matt. xxv. 41,) "Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." (Matt. vii. 23.) And, therefore, all that is but like it, is terrible to them that have any regard of God, or their salvation. (Luke xiii. 27.)

Doct. 3. The sorrows of Christ's disciples are but short. It is but now that they have sorrow : and how quickly will this now be gone !

Reas. 1. Life itself is but short, and, therefore, the sorrows of this life are but short. Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble ; he cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down ; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. (Job xiv. 1, 2.) Though our days are evil, they are but few. (Gen. xlvii. 9.) As our time maketh haste, and posteth away, so also do our sorrows, which will attain their period together with our

lives. As the pleasure of sin, so the sufferings of the godly, are but for a season. (Heb. xi. 26.) "Now, for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations." (1 Pet. i. 6.) The pleasures and the pains of so short a life, are but like a pleasant or a frightful dream; how quickly shall we awake, and all is vanished. If we lived as long as they did before the flood, then worldly interest, prosperity, and adversity, would be of greater signification to us, and yet they should seem nothing in comparison of eternity: for where now are all the fleshly pains or pleasures of Adam or Methuselah? Much more are they inconsiderable in so short a life as one of ours. Happy is the man whose sorrows are of no longer continuance than this short and transitory life!

Reas. 2. God's displeasure with his servants is but short, and, therefore, his corrections are but short. (Psalm xxx. 5.) "His anger endureth but for a moment, but in his favour is life." (Isa. liv. 7, 8.) "For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercy will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." (Isa. xxvi. 20.) "Come, my people, enter into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee, hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." Thus even in judgment doth he remember mercy, and consumeth us not, because his compassions fail not. (Lam. iii.) "He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger for ever; for he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust." (Psalm ciii. 9, 14.) His short corrections are purposely fitted to prepare us for endless consolations.

Reas. 3. Our trial also must be but short, and, therefore, so must be our sorrows. Though God will not have us receive the crown, without the preparation of a conflict and a conquest, yet will he not have our fight and race too long, lest it overmatch our strength, and his grace, and we should be overcome. Though our faith and we must be tried in the fire, yet God will see that the furnace be not over hot, and that we stay no longer, but till our dross be separated from us. (1 Pet. i. 6, 7, 9.) God putteth us not into the fire to consume us, but to refine us, (Psalm cxix. 67, 75,) that when we come out we may say, (Psalm cxxix. 1—3,) "It is good for us that we were afflicted," (Psalm cxix. 71; Isaiah xlix. 13,) and then he will save the afflicted people. (Psalm xviii. 27.)

Reas. 4. The power of those that afflict God's servants wrongfully, is but short; and therefore, the sorrows of such affliction can be but short; though it be foreign churches of whom I speak, I hope it is to such as take their case to be to them as their own: while they are breathing out threatenings, they are ready to breathe out their guilty souls. If a man in a dropsy or consumption persecute us, we would not be over fearful of him, because we see he is a dying man. And so little is the distance between the death of one man and another, that we may well say, 'All men's lives are in a consumption, and may bear their indignation, as we would do the injuries of a dying man. How short is the day of the power of darkness. Christ calleth it but an hour; "This is your hour, and the power of darkness." (Luke xxii. 53.) How quickly was Herod eaten of worms, and many another cut off in the height of their prosperity, when they have been raging in the heat of persecution. Little thought Ahab that he had been so near his woful day, when he had given order that Micaiah should be fed with the bread and water of affliction, till he returned in peace. What persecutions have the death of a Licinius, a Julian, a queen Mary, &c., shortened? While they are raging they are dying; while they are condemning the just, they are going to be condemned by their most just avenger. How quickly will their corpse be laid in dust, and their condemned souls be put under the chains of darkness, till the judgment of the great and dreadful day? (2 Pet. xxiv.) He is not only an unbeliever, but irrational or inconsiderate, that cannot see their end, (Jude 6,) in the greatest of their glory. How easy is it to see these bubbles vanishing, and to foresee the sad and speedy period of all their cruelties and triumphs? "Knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed upon earth, that the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment? Though his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds, yet he shall perish for ever like his own dung. They which have seen him, shall say, Where is he? He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found; yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night. The eye also which saw him, shall see him no more, neither shall his place behold him." (Job xx. 4—9.) Though pride do compass them about as a chain, and violence cover them as a garment, and they are corrupt, and speak oppression, or calumny, wickedly, they speak loftily, or from on high. Though they set their mouth against the heavens, and

their tongue walketh through the earth, yet surely they are set in slippery places. God doth cast them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation as in a moment? They are utterly consumed with terrors; as a dream* from one that awaketh, so, O Lord, in awaking, (or raising up, that is, saith the Chaldee paraphrase, in thy day of judging, or as all the other translations, *in civitate tua*, in thy kingdom or government,) thou shalt despise their image, that is, show them and all the world how despicable that image of greatness, and power, and felicity was which they were so proud of. If such a bubble † of vain-glory, such an image of felicity, such a dream of power and greatness be all that the church of God hath to be afraid of, it may well be said, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils." ‡ (Isa. ii. 22.) "For wherein is he to be accounted of." (Psalm cxlvi. 4.) His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth, in that very day his thoughts perish. And, "Behold the Lord God will help me, who is he that shall condemn me? Lo, they all shall wax old as a garment, the moth shall eat them up." (Isa. l. 9.) And, "Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law. Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings, for the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wood, but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation." (Isa. li. 7, 8.) The sorrows which so short-lived power can inflict, can be but short. You read of their victories and persecutions in the news-books one year, and quickly after of their death.

Use. Hence, therefore, you may learn how injudicious they are, that think religion is disparaged by such short and small afflictions of believers, and how unexcusable they are who yield unto temptation, and venture upon sin, and comply with the ungodly, and forsake the truth, through the fear of so short and momentary sorrows, when there is none of them but would endure the prick of a pin, or the scratch of a briar, or the biting of a flea to gain a kingdom, or the opening of a vein, or

* Or as Amyraldus Paraphras., "Cum olim evigilabunt, præsens eorum felicitas erit instar somnii, quod somno discusso dissipatum est: quin etiam antequam evigilent, in ipsa illa urbe in qua antea florebant vanam istam felicitatis pompam, in qua antea volitabant, reddes contemnendam, tanquam umbram aut imaginem evanescentem; in qua nihil solidi est."

† "Nubecula est cito evanescit," said Athanasius of Julian.

‡ When Julian's death was told at Antioch, they all cried out, "Maxime fatue! ubi sunt vaticinia tua? Vicit Deus et Christus ejus." Abbas Uspargens. page 91.

the griping of a purge to save their lives. Oh! how deservedly are ungodly men forsaken of God, for how short a pleasure do they forsake him, and the everlasting pleasures. And how short a trouble do they avoid by running into everlasting trouble. If sin had not first subdued reason, men would never make it a matter of question, whether to escape so small a suffering, they should break the laws of the most righteous God, nor would they once put so short a pain or pleasure into the balance against the endless pain and pleasure. Nor would a temptation bring them to deliberate on a matter, which should be past deliberation with a man that is in his wits. And yet, alas! how much do these short concerns prevail through all the world! Unbelievers are short-sighted, they look only or chiefly to things near and present. A lease of this empty world for a few years, yea, an uncertain tenure of it, is preferred before the best security for eternal life. Its present pleasures which they must have, and its present sorrows which they take care to escape. As Christ hath taught us to say about these worldly things, so the devil hath taught them to say about everlasting things, "Care not for to-morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself; sufficient to the day is the evil thereof." (Matt. vi. 34.) Therefore when the day of their calamity shall come, a despairing conscience will perpetually torment them, and say, 'This is but the sorrow which thou chooseth to endure, or the misery which thou wouldest venture on, to escape a present, inconsiderable pain.'

If there be any of you that shall think that present sufferings are considerable things, to be put into the scales against eternity, or that are tempted to murmuring and impatience under such short afflictions, I desire them but to consider, 1. That your suffering will be no longer than your sin. And if it endure but as long, is it any matter of wonder or repining? Can you expect to keep your sickness, and yet to be wholly freed from the pain? Can sin and suffering be perfectly separated? Do you think to continue ignorant and proud, and selfish, and in so much remaining unbelief, carnality, worldliness, and sloth, and yet never to feel the rod or spur, nor suffer any more than if you had been innocent? Deceive not yourselves, it will not be. (Gen. iv. 7.) Sin lieth at the door, and be sure at last it will find you out. (Numb. xxxii. 23.) "Behold the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth, much more the ungodly and the sinner." (Prov. xi. 31.) "Judgment must begin at the house of God, and

the righteous are saved with much ado." (1 Pet. iv. 17, 18.) God is not reconciled to the sins of any man, and as he will show by his dealings that he is reconciled to their persons, so will he show that he is not reconciled to their sins. If God continue your sufferings any longer than you continue your sin, and if you can truly say, 'I am afflicted though I am innocent,' then your impatience may have some excuse.

2. Your sorrows shall be no longer than you make them necessary, and will you grudge at your own benefit? Or at the trouble of your physic while you continue your disease? It is but "if need be that now for a season ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations." (1 Peter i. 6.) And who maketh the need? Is it God or you? Who maketh you dull, and slothful, and sensual? Who turneth your hearts to earthly things, and deprives you of the sweetness of things spiritual and heavenly? Who maketh you proud, and unbelieving, and uncharitable? Is it he that doth this, that causeth the need of your afflictions, and is to be blamed for the bitterness of them? but it is your physician that is to be thanked and praised for fitting them so wisely to your cure.

3. Your sorrows shall not be so long as you deserve. It is strange ingratitude, for that man to grudge at a short affliction that is saved from everlasting misery, and confesseth he hath deserved the pains of hell. Confess with thankfulness, that "it is his mercy that you are not consumed and condemned, because his compassions fail not. If God be your portion, hope in him; for the Lord is good to them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that you both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord; it is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth; he sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him; he putteth his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope. He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him, he is filled full with reproach; for the Lord will not cast off for ever, but though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion, according to the multitude of his mercies. (Lam. iii. 22—33.) All that is come upon us is for our evil deeds, and for our great trespasses, and God hath punished us less than our iniquities. (Ezr. ix. 13.)

4. Your sorrows shall not be so long as the sorrows of the ungodly, nor as those that you must endure, if you will choose sin to escape these present sorrows. Abel's sorrow is not so long as Cain's; nor Peter's or Paul's so long as Judas's. If the

offering of a more acceptable sacrifice do cost a righteous man his life, alas, what is that to the punishment that malignant, envious Cainites, or treacherous Judases must endure. What is the worst that man can do, or the most that God will here inflict, to the reprobates, endless, hellish torments? Oh, had you seen what they endure, or had you felt those pains but a day or hour, I can hardly think that you would ever after make so great a matter of the sufferings of a Christian here for Christ, or that you would fear such sufferings more than hell. It is disingenuous to repine at so gentle a rod, at the same time whilst millions are in the flames of hell, and when these sufferings tend to keep you thence.

5. Your sorrows shall not be so long as your following joys, if you be persevering, conquering believers. What is a sickness, or a scorn, or a prison, or banishment, or shame, or death, when it must end in the endless joys of heaven. Oh, do but believe these with a lively, sound, effectual faith, and you will make light of all the sufferings in the way, "Nihil crux sentit in nervo," saith Tertullian, "cum animus est in cœlo." (Heb. xi. 25, 26, &c.) The mind that is in heaven, and seeth him that is invisible, will easily bear the body's pains. Mistake not in your accounts, and you will reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (Rom. viii. 18.) "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, doth work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things that are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.)

Use 2. And if it be but for a now that you must have sorrows, how reasonable is it that those sorrows be moderated and mixed with joy? And how just are those commands, "Rejoice evermore." "Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven." (1 Thess. v. 16; Matt. v. 10—12.) "Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation." (Rom. xii. 12.) How rational was their joy, who being beaten and forbidden to preach, "departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ." (Acts v. 42.) "Rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers in Christ's sufferings. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you; on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part

he is glorified." (1 Pet. iv. 13, 14.) It is a shame to be dejected under a short and tolerable pain, which is so near to the eternal pleasure, and to suffer as if we believed not the end, and so to sorrow as men that are without hope.

Doct. 4. Christ will again visit his sorrowful disciples. He removeth not from them with an intent to cast them off. When he hideth his face, he meaneth not to forsake them; when he taketh away any ordinances or mercies, he doth not give them a bill of divorce. When he seemeth to yield to the powers of darkness, he is not overcome, nor will he give up his kingdom or interest in the world. When he letteth the boar into his vineyard, it is not to make it utterly desolate, or turn it common to the barren wilderness: for,

1. He hath conquered the greatest enemies already, and, therefore, there remaineth none to conquer him. He hath triumphed over Satan, death, and hell; he hath conquered sin, and what is there left to depose him from his dominion?

2. He retaineth still his relation to his servants; whether he be corporally present or absent, he knoweth his own, and it is their care also that whether present or absent, they may be accepted of him. (2 Cor. v. 7—9.) He is their head while they are suffering on earth; and, therefore, he feelth their sufferings and infirmities. (Heb. iv. 15.) And hence it is that he thus rebuketh a persecuting zealot, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts ix. 4.)

3. He hath not laid by the least measure of his love; he loveth us in heaven as much as he did on earth: "Having loved his own which were in the world, to the end he loved them." (John xiii. 1.) And as Joseph's love could not long permit him to conceal himself from his brethren, but broke out the more violently after a short restraint, so that he fell on their necks and wept; so will not the more tender love of Christ permit him long to hide his face, or estrange himself from the people of his love, and when he returneth, it will be with redoubled expressions of endearment.

4. His covenant with his servants is still in force; his promises are sure, and shall never be broken, though the performance be not so speedy as we desire. "Know, therefore, that the Lord thy God he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations; and repayeth them that hate him to their face to destroy them; he will not be slack

to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face." (Deut. vii. 9.) "He keepeth covenant and mercy with his servants that walk before him with all their heart." (1 Kings viii. 23 ; Dan. ix. 4 ; Neh. i. 5, and ix. 32.) And it is the promise of Christ when he departed from his servants, that "He will come again and take them to himself, that where he is, there they may be also. (John xiv. 3, and xii. 26.)

5. His own interest, and honour, and office, and preparations, do engage him to return to his disconsolate flock ; his jewels and peculiar treasure are his interest. (Mal. iii. 17 ; 1 Peter ii. 9 ; Exodus xix. 5.) He that hath chosen but a little flock, (Luke xii. 32,) and confineth his interest and treasure into such a narrow compass, will not forsake that little flock, but secure them to his kingdom. He that hath made it his office to redeem and save them, and hath so dearly bought them, and gone so far in the work of their salvation, will lose none of all his cost and preparations ; but for his people, and his blood, and his honour, and his Father's will, and love, will certainly finish what he hath undertaken. And, therefore, his withdrawals shall not be everlasting.

6. It is for their sakes that he withdraweth for a time ; though the bitter part be for their sin, it is intended as medicinal for their benefit ; sometimes he doth it to awake and humble them, and stir them up to seek him, and call after him ; to show them what they have done in provoking him to withdraw and hide his face, that renewed repentance may prepare them for the comforts of his return. Sometimes he hath such work for them to do, which is not so agreeable to his presence ; as fasting, and mourning, and confessing him in sufferings. (Matt. ix. 15.) And sometimes he hath comforts of another kind to give them in his seeming absence. "I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away ; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will send him to you." (John xvi. 7.) As there were comforts which the disciples were fittest for in Christ's bodily absence, so when he will take away his ordinances, or our prosperity or friends, there are comforts of another sort, in secret communion with him, and in suffering for him, which his people may expect ; not that any can expect it, who on that pretence do reject these ordinances and mercies no more than the disciples could have expected the Comforter, if they had rejected the corporal presence of Christ ; but God hath such supplies for those that mourn for his departure.

Use 1. Misunderstand not then the departings of your Lord. It is too bad to say with the evil servant, "My Lord delayeth his coming;" and worse to say he will never return. 1. He will return at his appointed day to judge the world; to justify his saints, whom the world condemned; to answer the desires, and satisfy all the expectations of believers; and to comfort, and everlastingly reward the faithful that have patiently waited his return. And when he returneth with salvation, then shall we also return from our calamities, and shall discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that served God, and him that served him not. (Mal. iii. 18.) Undoubtedly our "Redeemer liveth, and shall stand at the latter day upon the earth, and though, after our skin, worms devour these bodies, yet in our flesh we shall see God. (Job xix. 25, 26.) "Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen." (Rev. i. 7.) 'Though unbelieving scoffers, shall say, "Where is the promise of his coming?" (2 Pet. iii. 4.) Yet believers consider, "That a day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years but as a day; and that the Lord is not slack of his promise, but long-suffering." (Ver. 8, 9.) "He will not leave us comfortless, but will come unto us." (John xiv. 18.) "The patient expectation of the just shall not be forgotten, nor in vain. (Psalm ix. 7, 8.) "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe in that day." (2 Thess. i. 6—10.)

2. And he will return also to the seemingly forsaken flocks of his disciples; he hath his times of trial, when the shepherds being smitten, the sheep are scattered; and he hath his times of gathering the scattered ones again together, and "giving them pastors after his own heart, that shall feed them with knowledge and understanding." (Jer. iii. 14, 15.) And shall say, "What is the chaff unto the wheat." (Jer. xxiii. 28.) When we cry, "Wo is me for my hurt; my wound is grievous!" We must also say, "Truly this is a grief, and I must bear it; my

tabernacle is spoiled, and all my cords are broken; my children are gone forth of me, and they are not; there is none to stretch forth my tent any more, and to set up my curtains; for the pastors are become brutish, and have not sought the Lord. O Lord correct me, but with judgment, not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing." (Jer. x. 19—21, 24.) "Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness: and being desolate it mourneth to me; the whole land is made desolate, because no man layeth it to heart." (Jer. xii. 10, 11.) "But wo be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture, saith the Lord. Therefore, thus saith the Lord, against the pastors that feed my people; ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them; behold I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, and I will gather the remnant of my flock. And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord." (Ezek. xxxiv.) "Wo to the shepherds of Israel that feed themselves; should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed, but ye feed not the flocks. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. Thus saith the Lord, Behold I am against the shepherds, and I will require my flock at their hands, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth. Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep and seek them out, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And as for you, O my flock, Behold I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he-goats. Is it a small thing to you to have eaten up the good pasture, but ye must tread down with your feet the residue of your pastures? and to have drank of the deep waters, but you must foul the residue with your feet? And as for my flock, they eat that which you have trodden with your feet, and they drink that which ye have fouled with your feet. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God unto them; Behold I, even I will judge between the fat cattle and the lean? Because ye have

thrust with side and with shoulder, and pushed all the diseased with your horns, till ye have scattered them abroad," &c. Read the rest. Particular churches may be scattered to dissolution, but none of the faithful members.

3. And Christ hath his returning time, to the souls of his servants which seem to be forsaken by him: "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." (Psalm xxx. 5.) When he seemeth their "enemy, and writeth bitter things against them, he is their surest friend, and will justify them himself from their accusers. Though they may be troubled when they remember God, and their spirit be overwhelmed in them, and their souls refuse to be comforted, and say, Will the Lord cast off for ever, and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Yet must we rebuke this unbelief, and say, This is my infirmity; I will remember the works of the Lord; surely I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate of thy works, and talk of thy doings." (Psalm lxxvii.) The long night that hath no day, the long winter that hath no summer is the reward of the ungodly; but light ariseth to the righteous in his darkness, and "joy to them that are upright in heart." (Psalm xcii. 4.) Light is sown for them, and in season will spring up. (Psalm xcvi. 11.) The righteousness which was hid from the world by false accusations, and from ourselves by the terrors and mistakes of darkness, will God "bring forth as light, and our judgment as the noon-day." (Psalm xxxvii. 6.) Our eclipse will vanish when the sun returneth, and our sins no longer interpose: and though all our inquiries and complainings have not brought us out of the dark, yet "God is the Lord who showeth us light;" (Psalm cxviii. 27;) "and in his light we shall see light." (Psalm xxxvi. 9.) Say then, O distrustful, trembling Christian, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul! and why art thou thus disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God." (Psalm xlii. 5, 11, and xliii. 5.) Though now you "go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy, God will send out his light and truth, and they shall lead you, and bring you to his holy hill and tabernacle: and then you shall go with praise to the altar of God, even of God your exceeding joy." (Psalm xlii. 2—4.)

Use 2. Learn, then, how to behave yourselves in the absence

of your Lord, till his return. If you ask me how;—Answer 1. Be not content and pleased with his absence. You must bear it, but not desire it. Else you are either enemies, or children that have run themselves into such guilt and fears, that they take their father for their enemy. 2. Nay, be not too indifferent and insensible of your Lord's departure. Love is not regardless of the company of our beloved. He may well take it ill, when you can let him go, and be as merry without him, as if his absence were no loss to you. If you care no more for him, he will make you care, before you shall feel the comforts of his presence. Such contempt is the way to a worse forsaking: call after him till he return, if he hide his face. 3. Turn not aside to the creature for content, and seek not to make up the loss of his presence with any of the deceitful comforts of the world. Let him not see you take another in his stead, as if riches, or power, or worldly friends, or fleshly pleasure, would serve your turn instead of Christ. If once you come to this, he may justly leave you to your vain contents, and let them serve your turn as long as they can, and see how well they will supply his room. Oh, see that no idol be admitted into his place till Christ return. 4. Be not emboldened, by his absence, to sin. Say not as the evil servant, in your hearts, 'My Lord delayeth his coming,' and so begin to smite your fellow-servants, and to eat, and drink with the drunken, lest your "Lord come in a day when you look not for him, and cut you asunder, and appoint your portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. xxiv. 48—51.) Because Christ cometh not to judge the wicked as soon as they have sinned, they are emboldened to sin more fearlessly; and because sentence against an evil work is not speedily executed, therefore the hearts of the sons of men are fully set in them to do evil." (Eccles. viii. 11.) But, "behold the Judge is at the door." (James v. 9.) "He that cometh will not tarry; and for all these things you must come to judgment." (Eccles. xi. 9, and xii. 14.) 5. Be not discouraged by your Lord's delay, but wait his coming in faith and patience. Can you not wait for him so short a time? Oh! how quickly will it be accomplished. Sink not into despondency of mind. Be not dismayed in the duties or sufferings to which you are called. "Lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed." (Heb. xii. 12, 13.) "Be steadfast, unmoveable,

always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. xv. 58.) "Be sober, and hope unto the end." (1 Pet. i. 13.) "Ye are the house of Christ, if ye hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." (Heb. iii. 6, 14, and vi. 11. "Ye have need of patience, that having done the will of God, ye may inherit the promise." (Heb. x. 36, 11.)

Doct. 5. "When Christ shall again appear to his disciples, their sorrows shall be turned into joy: when Christ returneth, joy returneth," saith David. (Psal. xxx. 7.) "Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled." But (v. 11, 12) "Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness, to the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent: O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever." When the sun ariseth it is day, and its approach dispelleth the winter frosts, and reviveth the almost dying creatures, and calleth up the life which was hidden in the seed, or retired unto the root, after a sharp and spending winter. How quickly doth the sun's return recover the verdure and beauty of the earth, and clothe it in green, and spangle it with the ornaments of odoriferous flowers, and enrich it with sweet and plenteous fruits: the birds that were either hid or silent, appear and sing, and the face of all things is changed into joy. So is it with the poor deserted soul, upon the return of Christ; unbelieving doubts and fears then vanish: the garments of sadness are laid aside, and those of gladness are put on: the language of distrust and despairing lamentations are first turned into words of peace, and then into joyful thankfulness and praise. The soul that was skilled in no spiritual discourse, but complaining of a dead and frozen heart, of dull and cold and lifeless duties, is now taken up in the rehearsals of the works of infinite love, and searching into the mysteries of redemption, and reciting the great and precious promises, and magnifying the name and grace of its Redeemer, and expatiating in the praises of the everlasting kingdom, the heavenly glory, the blessed society, and especially of the Lamb, and of the eternal God. You would not think that this is the same person, that lately could scarce think well of God, or that dwelt in tears, and dust, and darkness, and could think of nothing but sin and hell, and from every text and every providence, concluded nothing, but undone, or damned: would you think this joyful, thankful soul, were the same that lately was crying

on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" that could find nothing written on the tables of his heart, but forsaken, miserable, and undone; that daily cried out, 'It is too late, there is no hope, I had a day of grace, but it is past and gone.' When Christ returneth, and causeth his face to shine upon them, all this is turned into 'Praise and honour and glory unto the Lamb, and to the almighty and most holy God, that liveth for ever, and is the everlasting joy and portion of his saints.' And sooner or later, thus will it be with all the upright, that wait on God in the day of trial, and deal not falsely in his covenant. The Son who was brought up with the Father, and was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him, rejoicing also in the habitable parts of the earth, whose delights were with the sons of men, doth bless the children of wisdom with a participation of his delights; for "blessed are they that keep his ways."—"Blessed is the man that heareth him, watching daily at his gates, waiting at the posts of his doors: for he that findeth him findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord." (Prov. viii. 30—36.) Though Christ had left his disciples so lately under fears and trouble, guilty of deserting him, and seemingly now deserted by him, yet early on the third day, he ariseth for their consolation, and presently sendeth them these joyful words, in the first speech he uttereth, and that by a woman that had been sorrowful and a sinner, "Go to my brethen, and say unto them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." (John xx. 17.) Those that his ministers have long been comforting in vain, when Christ returneth he will revive and comfort them in a moment, and with a word. The soul that now crieth 'Oh, it is impossible, it will never be,' doth little know how easy it is with Christ. It is but saying, "Lazarus, arise:" or, "Let there be light," and there will be life and light immediately at his command.

2. And so when he restoreth his ordinances and order to a forsaken church, and restoreth their holy opportunities and advantages of grace, what gladness and praising their Redeemer will there be? As it was with the churches upon the death of Julian, and after the heathen and the Arian persecutions, in the happy reign of Constantine, Theodosius, Marcian, &c. How joyfully did the English exiles return to worship God in their native land, upon the death of queen Mary; and see the fall of Bonner and Gardiner, that had sacrificed so many holy Christ-

ians in the flames ! How gladly did they grow in the soil that was manured with the blood and ashes of their faithful brethren, and reap the fruit of their fortitude and sufferings ! When Christ whipped the buyers and sellers out of the temple, and would not let them make the house of prayer a place of merchandise, what hosannahs were sounded in Jerusalem. (Matt. xxi. 15, 16.) "When the salvation of Israel cometh out of Zion, and the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad." (Psal. xiv. 7.) "Blessed are they that dwell in his house, for they will be still praising him. For a day in his courts is better than a thousand." (Psal. lxxxiv. 4, 10.) "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound ; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance ; in thy namè shall they rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted : for the Lord is our defence, and the Holy One of Israel is our king." (Psal. lxxxix. 15—18.) What gladness was there at a private meeting of a few Christians that met to pray for Peter, when they saw him delivered and come among them. (Acts xii. 12, and v. 14.) When the churches had rest, they were edified, and walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost. (Acts ix. 31.)

3. But the great joy will be when Christ returneth in his glory at the last day. What a multitude of sorrows will there be ended ! And what a multitude of souls will then be comforted ! What a multitude of desires and prayers, and expectations will then be answered ! How many thousand that have sowed in tears, shall then reap in everlasting joy ! When the creature shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. (Rom. viii. 26, 27.) When all the faith and labour, and patience of all the saints from the beginning of the world, shall be rewarded with the rivers of celestial pleasure, and the just shall enter into their Master's joy. (Matt. xxv. 21.)

That you may the better understand the sweetness of all these sorts of joy, which Christ's return will bring to saints, observe these following ingredients in them.

1. It is Christ himself that is the object of their joy : he that is the dearly beloved of their souls ; that for their sakes was made a man of sorrows ; it is he who is their hope and help : with whom they are in covenant as their only Saviour ; in whom they have trusted, with whom they have deponed their

souls! If he should fail them, all would fail them; and they were of all men most miserable: they would be comfortless if he should not come unto them, and were not their comfort. The world cannot help and comfort them, for it is empty, vain, a transient shadow: it will not, for it is malignant, and our professed enemy. For we know that we are of God, and the whole world is *in maligno positus*, set on wickedness (or as some think, because δ *πονηρός* is put for the devil in the foregoing verse, and the article here also used,) is as it were planted into the devil, or put under the devil, to war against Christ and the holy seed: and indeed Satan seemeth in this war against the church, to have somewhat like success as he had against Christ himself: as Christ must be a man of sorrows and scorn, and be crucified as a blasphemer and a traitor, before he rejoice the hearts of his disciples by his resurrection, so the church was a persecuted, scorned handful of men, for the first three hundred years, and then it rose by christian emperors to some reputation, till Satan by another game overcame them by Judas his successors; that for 'what will you give me' by pride and worldliness betrayed them into that deplorable state, in which they have continued these 900 years at least: so that the christian name is confined to a sixth part of the world; and serious sanctified believers are persecuted more by the hypocrites that wear the livery of Christ, than by heathens and infidels themselves. And when the church is so low, almost like Christ on the cross and the grave, will not a resurrection be a joyful change? When it crieth out on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" will not Christ appearing for its deliverance be a welcome sight?

It was when Adam had brought a curse on himself and his posterity, and all the earth, that redemption by the holy seed was promised; and when Satan had conquered man, that Christ was promised to conquer him. It was when the world was destroyed by the deluge that its reparation was promised to Noah: it was when Abraham was a sojourner in a strange land, that the peculiar promises were made to him and his seed. It was when the Israelites were enslaved to extremity, that they were delivered. And it was when the sceptre was departing from Judah, and they and the world were gone from God, that Christ the light of the world was sent. And when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? When we see how vast the heathen and infidel kingdoms are, and what a poor

despised people those are that set their chief hopes on heaven, and how Satan seemeth every where to prevail against them, and most by false and worldly Christians, what a trial is this to our faith and hope? As the disciples said of a crucified Christ, we trusted it had been he that should have redeemed Israel; we are almost ready in the hour of temptation to say, we trusted that God's name should have been hallowed, and his kingdom come, and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven? And oh, how seasonable, and how joyful will the church's resurrection be after such low and sad distress? Many a sad Christian under the sentence of death, is going hence with fear and trouble: when a moment shall transmit them into the joyful presence of their Lord, and the possession of that which with weakness and fear they did but believe.

2. And Christ will not come or be alone: with him will come the New Jerusalem: he will put glory on each member, but much more on the whole. Oh, how many of our old companions are now there! Not under temptation, or any of the tempter's power! Not under the darkness of ignorance, error, or unbelief! Not under the pains of a languid, diseased, corruptible body! Not under the fear of sin, or Satan, or wicked men: not under the terror of death or hell, of an accusing conscience, or the wrath of God: oh, with what joy shall we see and enjoy that glorious society! To be translated thither from such a world as this, from such temptations, sins, such fears and sorrows, such perfidious malignant wickedness, what will it be but to be taken as from a gaol unto a kingdom, and from the suburbs of hell unto the communion of blessed saints and angels, and into the joy of our Lord.

Doct. 6. Your joy shall no man take from you: the joy that cometh at Christ's return will be a secure and everlasting joy. Impregnable as heaven itself; Christ and his church will be crucified no more. Look not then for Christ and his church in the grave. He is not here; he is risen. Who can we fear will deprive us of that joy?

1. Not ourselves: and then we need to fear no other: our folly and sin is our enemies' strength: they can do nothing against us, without ourselves. The arrows that wound us are all feathered from our own wings. But our trying time will then be past, and confirmation will be the reward of conquest. He that hath kept us in the day of our trial, will keep us in our state of rest and triumph. How the (now) fallen angels came

to lose their first innocency and welfare, is unknown to us : but we have a promise of being for ever with Christ.

2. Nor shall devils deprive us of that joy : neither by those malicious temptations wherewith they now molest and haunt us : not by the unhappy advantages which we have given them by our sin, to corrupt our imaginations and thoughts, and affections, or to disturb our passions, or pervert our understandings. Nor by any terror or violence to molest us.

3. Nor shall any men take from us that joy ; the blessed will increase it : their joy will be ours ; and the wicked will be utterly disabled ; they will be miserable themselves in hell. They will no more endanger us by flattering temptations ; nor terrify us by threats ; nor tread us down by their power ; nor hurt us in their malice ; nor render us odious by false accusations ; nor triumph over us with pride and false reproach. They that said of the church, as of Christ, "He trusted in God, let him deliver him now if he will have him ; for he hath said, I am the Son of God ;" (Matt. xxvii. 43 ;) they shall see that God hath delivered his church, and he will have it.

Use 1. And will not a firm belief of all this rejoice the soul under all disappointments and sufferings on earth ? And doth not our dejectedness and want of joy declare the sinful weakness of our faith ? O sirs, our sadness, our impatience, our small desire to be with Christ, the little comfort that we fetch from heaven do tell us, that Christianity, and a life of faith, is a harder work than most imagine ; and the art and form, and words of holiness are much more common than a holy, heavenly mind and life. Christ speaketh many words of pity to his servants under sorrows and sinking grief, which some mistake for words of approbation or command. "Why are ye afraid, O ye of little faith," were words both of compassion and reproof. I am sure the great unbelief that appeareth in much of our dejectedness and sorrow, deserveth more reproof than our sufferings deserve to be entertained with those sorrows.

Use 2. I will therefore take my farewell of you, in advising, and charging you as from God, that you be not deceived by a flattering world, nor dejected by a frowning world, but place your hopes on those joys which no man can take from you. If you cannot trust the love of God, and the grace and promises of our Saviour, and the witness of the Holy Spirit, you must despair ; for there is no other trust.

So many of you seem to have chosen this good part, the one

thing necessary which shall never be taken from you, that in the midst of our sorrows, I must profess that I part with you with thankfulness and joy. And I will tell you for what I am so thankful, that you may know what I would have you be for the time to come.

I. I thank the Lord, that chose for me so comfortable a station, even a people whom he purposed to bless.

II. I thank the Lord that I have not laboured among you in vain, and that he opened the hearts of so great a number of yours, to receive his word with a teachable and willing mind.

III. I thank the Lord that he hath made so many of you as helpful to your neighbours in your place, as I have been in mine; and that you have not been uncharitable to the souls of others, but have with great success endeavoured the good of all.

IV. I rejoice that God hath kept you humble, that you have not been addicted to proud ostentation of your gifts or wisdom; nor inclined to invade any part of the sacred office, but to serve God in the capacity where he hath placed you.

V. I rejoice that God hath made you unanimous, and kept out sects and heresies, and schisms, so that you have served him as with one mind and mouth; and that you have not been addicted to proud wranglings, disputings, and contentions, but have lived in unity, love and peace, and the practice of known and necessary truths.

VI. I rejoice that your frequent meetings in your houses, spent only in reading, repeating your teacher's sermons, prayer and praise to God, have had none of those effects which the conventicles of proud opiniators and self-conceited persons use to have, and which have brought even needful converse, and godly communication into suspicion at least with some, that argue against duty from the abuse.

Yea, I rejoice that hereby so much good hath been done by you. You have had above forty years' experience of the great benefit of such well ordered christian converse, increasing knowledge, quickening holy desires, prevailing with God, for marvelous, if not miraculous answers of your earnest prayers, keeping out errors and sects.

VII. I am glad that you have had the great encouragement of so many sober, godly, able, peaceable ministers, in all that part of the country round about you, and mostly through that and the neighbour countries: men that avoided vain and bitter

contentions, that engaged themselves in no sects or factions; that of a multitude, not above two that I know of, in all our association, had ever any hand in wars; but their principles and practices were reconciling and pacificatory; they consented to catechize all their parishioners, house by house, and to live in the peaceable practice of so much church discipline, as good Christians of several parties were all agreed in. And you have lived to see what that discipline was, and what were the effects of such agreement.

VIII. I am glad that you were kept from taking the solemn league and covenant, and the engagement, and all consent to the change of the constituted government of this kingdom. I took the covenant myself, of which I repent, and I will tell you why: I never gave it but to one man (that I remember) and he professed himself to be a Papist physician newly turned Protestant, and he came to me to give it him: I was persuaded that he took it in false dissimulation, and it troubled me to think what it was to draw multitudes of men by carnal interest so falsely to take it: and I kept it and the engagement from being taken in your town and country. At first it was not imposed but taken by volunteers: but after that it was made a test of such as were to be trusted or accepted. Besides the illegality, there are two things that cause me to be against it.

1. That men should make a mere dividing engine, and pretend it a means of unity: we all knew at that time when it was imposed, that a great part, if not the greatest, of church and kingdom were of another mind: and that as learned and worthy men were for prelacy, as most the world had (such as Usher, Morton, Hall, Davenant, Brownrig, &c.) And to make our terms of union to be such, as should exclude so many and such men, was but to imitate those church dividers and persecutors, who in many countries and ages, have still made their own impositions the engines of division, by pretence of union. And it seemeth to accuse Christ, as if he had not sufficiently made us terms of concord, but we must devise our own forms as necessary thereto.

2. And it was an imposing on the providence of God, to tie ourselves by vows to that as unchangeable, which we knew not but God might after change, as if we had been the masters of his providence. No man then knew but that God might so alter many circumstances, as might make some things sins, that were then taken for duty; and some things to be duty, which

then passed for sin. And when such changes come, we that should have been content with God's obligations, do find ourselves ensnared in our own rash vows.

And I wish that it teach no other men the way of dividing impositions, either to cut the knot, or to be even with the covenanters.

IX. I greatly rejoice, that family religion is so conscientiously kept up among you, that your children and apprentices, seem to promise us a hopeful continuation of piety among you.

X. And I thank God, that so great a number of persons, eminent for holiness, temperance, humility and charity, are safely got to heaven already, since I first came among you, and being escaped from the temptations and troubles of this present evil world, have left you the remembrance of their most imitable examples.

And having all this comfort in you, as to what is past, I shall once more leave you some of my counsels and requests, for the time to come, which I earnestly intreat you not to neglect.

I. Spend most of your studies in confirming your belief of the truth of the gospel, the immortality of the soul, and the life to come, and in exercising that belief, and laying up your treasure in heaven; and see that you content not yourselves in talking of heaven, and speaking for it; but that your hopes, your hearts, and your conversation be there; and that you live for it, as worldlings do for the flesh.

II. Flatter not yourselves with the hopes of long life on earth, but make it the sum of all your religion, care, and business, to be ready for a safe and comfortable death; for till you can fetch comfort from the life to come, you can have no comfort that true reason can justify.

III. Live as in a constant war against all fleshly lusts, and love not the world, as it cherisheth those lusts. Take heed of the love of money, as the root of manifold evils: think of riches with more fear than desire; seeing Christ hath told us, how hard and dangerous it maketh our way to heaven. When once a man falls deeply in love with riches, he is never to be trusted, but becomes false to God, to all others, and to himself.

IV. Be furnished beforehand with expectation and patience, for all evils that may befall you; and make not too great a

matter of sufferings, especially poverty, or wrong from men. It is sin and folly in poor men, that they overvalue riches, and be not thankful for their peculiar blessings. I am in hopes, that God will give you more quietness than many others, because there are none of you rich; it is a great means of safety to have nothing that tempteth another man's desire, nor that he envieth you for; despised men live quietly, and he that hath an empty purse, can sing among the robbers; he that lieth on the ground, feareth not falling. When Judea (and so when England by Saxons, Danes, &c.) was conquered, the poor were let alone to possess and till the land, and had more than before. It was the great and rich that were destroyed, or carried, or driven away. Is it not a great benefit to have your souls saved from rich men's temptations, and your bodies from the envy, assaults, and fears, and miseries that they are under?

V. Take heed of a self-conceited, unhumbled understanding, and of hasty and rash conclusions; it is the fool that rageth, and is confident: sober men are conscious of so much darkness and weakness, that they are suspicious of their apprehensions: proud self-conceitedness, and rash, hasty concluding, causeth most of the mischiefs in the world; which might be prevented, if men had the humility and patience to stay till things be thoroughly weighed and tried. Be not ashamed to profess uncertainty, where you are indeed uncertain. Humble doubting is much safer than confident erring.

VI. Maintain union and communion with all true Christians on earth; and therefore, hold to catholic principles of mere Christianity, without which you must needs crumble into sects. Love Christians as Christians, but the best most; locally separate from none, as accusing of them further than they separate from Christ, or deny you their communion, unless you will sin. The zeal of a sect as such, is partial, turbulent, hurtful to dissenters, and maketh men as thorns and thistles; but the zeal of Christianity as such, is pure and peaceable, full of mercy, and good fruits, mellow, and sweet, and inclineth to the good of all. If God give you a faithful, or a tolerable public minister; be thankful to God, and love, honour, and encourage him; and let not the imperfections of the Common Prayer make you separate from his communion; prejudice will make all modes of worship different from that which we prefer, to seem some heinous, sinful crime; but humble Christians are most careful about the frame of their own hearts, and conscious of so much faultiness in

themselves, and all their service of God, that they are not apt to accuse and aggravate the failings of others, especially in matters which God has left to our own determination. Whether we shall pray with a book, or without, in divers short prayers, or one long one; whether the people shall sing God's praise in tunes, or speak it in prose, &c., is left to be determined by the general rules of concord, order, and edification. Yet do not withdraw from the communion of soberly, godly non-conformists, though falsely called schismatics by others.

VII. Be sure that you maintain due honour and subjection to your governors: "Fear the Lord and the king, and meddle not with them that are given to change." (Prov. xxiv. 21.) And that in regard of the oath of God, (Eccles. viii. 2,) "Curse not the king, no not in thy thought, and curse not the rich in thy bed-chamber; for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter." (Eccles. x. 20.) Obey God with your first and absolute obedience, and no man against him, but obey the just commands of magistrates, and that out of obedience to God; and suffer patiently when you cannot obey. And if God should ever cast you under oppressing and persecuting governors, in your patience possess your souls; trust God and keep your innocency, and abhor all thoughts of rebellion or revenge; he that believeth will not make haste. Do nothing but what God will own, and then commit yourselves and your way to him. Repress wrath, and hate unpeaceable counsels; our way and our time must be only God's way and time. Self-saving men are usually the destroyers of themselves and others. Peter, that drew his sword for Christ, denied him the same night, with oaths and curses. Fools trust themselves, and wise men trust God: fools tear the tree, by beating down the fruit that is unripe and harsh; and wise men stay till it is ripe and sweet, and will drop into their hands: fools rip up the mother for an untimely birth; but wise men stay till maturity give it them. Fools take red-hot iron to be gold, till it burn their fingers to the bone; they rush into seditions and blood, as if it were a matter of jest; but wise men sow the fruit of righteousness in peace, and as much as in them lieth, live peaceably with all men: all men are mortal, both oppressors and oppressed: stay a little, and mortality will change the scene; God's time is best. Martyrdom seldom killeth the hundredth part so many as wars do: and he is no true-believer that taketh martyrdom to be his loss: and Christ is

more interested in his gospel, church, and honour than we. Queen Mary's cruelties, and the bishops' bonfires, made religion universally received the more easily when her short reign was ended. We may learn wit of the fool, that seeing great guns and muskets, asked, what they were to do; and the answerer said to 'kill men:' saith he, 'Do not men die here without killing? In our country they will die of themselves.'

VIII. Be sure that you keep up family religion; especially in the careful education of youth. Keep them from evil company, and from temptations; and especially of idleness, fulness, and baits of lust. Read the Scripture and good books, and call upon God, and sing his praise; and recreate youth with reading the history of the church, and the lives of holy men and martyrs: instruct them in catechisms and fundamentals.

IX. Above all, live in love to God and man; and let not selfishness and worldliness prevail against it. Think of God's goodness, as equal to his greatness and wisdom; and take yourselves as members of the same body with all true Christians. Blessed are they that faithfully practise those three grand principles which all profess, viz., 1. To love God as God above all, (and so to obey him.) 2. To love our neighbours as ourselves. 3. And to do as we would be done by. Love is not envious, malignant, censorious; it slandereth not; it persecuteth not; it oppresseth not; it defraudeth not; it striveth not to gain by another's loss: get men once to love their neighbours as themselves, and you may easily prognosticate peace, quietness, and concord; happiness to the land; and salvation to the people's souls.

Finally, brethren, live in love, and the God of love and peace shall be among you. The Lord save you from the evils of which I have here, and often warned you. Remember with thankfulness, the many years of abundant mercy which we have enjoyed, (though too much mixed with our sins, and vilified by some.) "Comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do; and I beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love, for their work sake, and be at peace among yourselves." (1 Thess. v. 11-13.) And the Lord deeply write on all our hearts these blessed words, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us: God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." (1 John iv. 16.) And remember,

“Seeing all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” (2 Peter iii. 11—13.)

I need not lengthen my counsels further to you now, having been called by the will and providence of God to leave behind me a multitude of books, which may remember you of what you heard, and acquaint the world what doctrine I have taught you, and if longer studies shall teach me to retract and amend many failings, in the writings or practice of my unripe, and less unexperienced age, as it will be to myself as pleasing as the cure of bodily disease, I hope it will not seem strange or ungrateful to you; though we must hold fast the truth which we have received, both you and I are much to be blamed, if we grow not in knowledge, both in matter, words, and method: the Lord grant that also we may grow in faith, obedience, patience in hope, love, and desire to be with Christ.

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (Heb. xiii. 20, 21.)