

Sermon X.

Matth. xi. 16.—“But whereunto shall I liken this generation?”

When our Lord Jesus, who had the tongue of the learned, and spoke as never man spake, did now and then find a difficulty to express the matter herein contained. “What shall we do?” The matter indeed is of great importance, a soul matter, and therefore of great moment, a mystery, and therefore not easily expressed. No doubt he knows how to paint out this to the life, that we might rather behold it with our eyes, than hear it with our ears, yet he uses this manner of expression, to stamp our hearts with a deep apprehension of the weight of the matter, and the depth of it. It concerns us all, as much as we can, to consider and attend unto it.

Two things are contained here. The entertainment Christ gets in the world, of the most part, and, the entertainment he gets from a few children, of whom he is justified. I say, it concerns you greatly to observe this,—for Christ observed it very narrowly,—what success both his forerunner and himself had. Christ begins here to expostulate with the multitudes, and with the scribes and Pharisees about it. But ere all be done he will complain to the Father. He now complains unto you, that he gets not ready acceptance amongst you, if it be possible that you may repent of the great injury done to the Son of God, no not so much to Christ, as your own souls, for “all who hate me love death, and he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul,” Prov. viii. 36. Wo unto your souls, for you have not hurt Christ, by so much despising him. Ye have not prejudiced the gospel, but ye have rewarded evil to yourselves, Isa. iii. 9. I say, Christ now complains of you to yourselves, if so be you will bethink yourselves in earnest, and return to yourselves, but if ye will not, he will at length complain to the Father. When he renders

[594]

up the kingdom, and gives an account of his administration unto God, he will report what entertainment ye gave his word. For he will say, "I have laboured in vain, and spent my strength for nought with such a man. All threatenings, all entreaties would not prevail with him to forsake his drunkenness, his swearing, his covetousness, his oppressions," &c. You know Christ's last long prayer, John xvii. He gives an account in it what acceptance he had among men, when he is finishing his ministry. These are the men he now speaks unto in the text, "Whereunto shall I liken this generation?" Thus he speaks of them to his Father. "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee." Well then, this is not so light a matter as ye apprehend. Ye come to hear daily, but know ye not that ye shall give an account of your hearing? Know ye not that there is one who observes and marks all the impressions which the word makes on your consciences? He knows all the blows of the sword of the word, that returns making no impression on your consciences. Christ says to the multitudes here, "And what went ye out for to see?" I pray you what went ye out to see, seeing ye have not believed his report? Why went ye out unto the wilderness? Know ye who spake, or in whose authority? May we not speak in these terms unto you, when we consider the little fruit of the gospel? What do you come to see, and what do ye come to hear every Sabbath, and other solemn days? I pray you ask at your own hearts, what your purpose is. Wherefore do ye come together so often? Men are rational in their business. They do nothing but for some purpose. They labour, and plough, and sow, in order to reap. They buy and sell to get gain. They have many projects and designs they still seek to accomplish. And shall we be only in matters of salvation and damnation so irrational? Shall we in the greatest thing of the greatest moment, because of eternal concernment be as perishing brutish beasts, that know not what we aim at? Christ will in the end ask you, what went ye out of your own houses so often to hear? What went you out to see? I pray you what

will ye answer? If ye say, we went to hear the word of the Lord, then he shall answer you, and why did not ye obey it? Then why did ye not hear it as my word, and regard it more? If ye shall say, we went to hear a man speak some good words unto us for an hour or two, then is Christ also engaged against you, because he sent him, and ye despise him, for he says, "He that despises me, despises him that sent me," so ye shall be caught both the ways. If ye think this to be God's word, I wonder why ye do not receive it, with the stamp of his authority in your hearts. Why do ye not bow your hearts to it, for it shall endure for ever, and judge you? Why do you sit⁴⁵² so many fair offers, so many sad warnings? Are not the drunkards warned every day by this word, that the curse of the Lord shall come upon them? Is not every one of you, according to your several stations and circumstances, warned to forsake your wicked ways, and your evil thoughts, to flee from the wrath to come, before the decree of the Lord pass forth, and before his fury burn as an oven? And if ye think these to be the true words of the eternal God, and the sayings of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, and the truth itself, if ye believe it as ye profess to do, why do ye not get out of the way of that wrath, which continues upon these sinners daily? Shall ye escape the judgment of God? Shall not his word overtake you though ministers that speak unto you will not live for ever? But these words they speak will surely take hold of you, as they did your fathers, so that ye shall say, "Like as the Lord of hosts hath said he will do unto us, so hath he done," Zech. i. 6. If ye do not think this is God's word, I beseech you, why do you come hither so oft? What do ye come to hear? Why take ye so much needless pains? Your coming here seems to speak that ye think it to be God's word and yet your conversation declares more plainly that ye believe it not. Yet Christ takes notice of you and O that ye, beloved, would search yourselves that so ye might hear the

⁴⁵² [To sit an offer is, not to accept it.—*Ed.*]

word as in the sight of the all seeing God, and in his sight, who will judge you according to it; a sermon thus heard, would be more profitable than all that ever ye heard. Now to what purpose speak we of these things unto you, and why do we choose this discourse, when ye expect to hear public things? I will tell you the reason of it. Because I conceive this is the great sin of the times, and the most reprehensive and fountain sin, the root of all our profanity and malignity, even this which Christ points out in this similitude. The great blessing and privilege of Scotland is the gospel. Ye all must grant this. Now, then, the great misery and sin of this nation is, the abuse and contempt of the glorious gospel, and if once we could make you sensible of this, ye would mourn for all other particular sins.

[595]

The words are very comprehensive. Ye shall find in them the different manifestations of God in his word, reduced to two heads. The Lord either mourns to us to make us mourn, or joys to us to make us dance. A similitude and likeness is the end of all the manifestations of himself, that we be one with him. Therefore when he would move our affections in us, he puts on the like, and clothes himself, in his word and dispensation, with such a habit as is suitable. So ye have both law and gospel. He laments in the one, he pipes in the other. Both sad and glad dispensations of his providence may be subordinate to these; the one, I mean his judgments, representing that to our eyes which his law did to our ears, making that visible of his justice, which we heard; the other, I mean mercies, represents that to our eyes, which the gospel did to our ears, making his good will, his forbearance, and long suffering, and compassion visible, that men might say, "As we have heard so have we seen in the city of our God." Now these should stir up suitable affections in men. This is their intendment and purpose, to stir up joy and grief, sorrow for sin, on the one hand, and joy in the Lord's salvation on the other hand; hatred of sin by the one, and the love of Christ by the other.

But what is the entertainment⁴⁵³ these get in the world? Ye shall see it different. In some it meets with different affections, or it makes them, and moves them, and these do justify wisdom. The accomplishment and performance of God's purposes, in the salvation of souls, justifies his word. They justify Christ by believing in him; Christ justifies us, by making us to believe in him, and applying his own righteousness to us. He that believes justifies the word, and Christ in the word, because he sets to his seal that God is true; and Christ likewise justifies the believer, by applying his righteousness unto him. The believer justifies wisdom, by acknowledging it as the Father's wisdom; Christ justifies the believer by making him and pronouncing him righteous, and a son of God. But in others, and in these a great many, it generally meets with hard hearts, stupid and insensible, incapable of these impressions. You know music is very apt to work upon men's spirits, and doth stir up several passions in them, as joy or grief. Now Christ and his ministers are the musicians that do apply their songs to catch men's ears and hearts, if so be they may stop their course and not perish. These are blessed Sirens⁴⁵⁴ that do so, and pipe, day and night, in season and out of season, some sad and woful ditties of men's sin and God's wrath, of the day

⁴⁵³ [Reception.—*Ed.*]

⁴⁵⁴ [The heathen mythologists represented the Sirens to be three in number, and described them as effecting the destruction of mariners, by luring them from their course with their singing.]

—They the hearts

Enchant of all, who on their coast arrive
 The wretch, who unforwarn'd approaching, hears
 The Sirens' voice, his wife and little ones
 Ne'er fly to gratulate his glad return;
 But him the Sirens sitting in the meads
 Charm with mellifluous song, although he see
 Bones heap'd around them, and the mouldering skins
 Of hapless men, whose bodies have decay'd.

Hom. Od. lib. xii. v. 39. Cowper's Translation.]

of judgment, of eternal punishment, that if it be possible, men may fore-apprehend these ills, before they fall into them without recovery. These are the boys in the market places that strive to sadden your hearts, and make you lament in time, before the day of howling, and weeping, and gnashing of teeth. These also have as many joyful and glad ditties, sweetening the sad. It may be, diverse men have diverse parts of this harmony. John had the woful and sad part, Christ took the joyful and glad part; so the one answered the other, and both made a complete harmony. It may be, one man in one spring mixes these two, and makes good music alone. The one part is intended to move men to grief, and mourn once, that they may not mourn for ever; the other to comfort in the meantime these that mourn, to mix their mourning with their hope of that blessed delivery in Jesus Christ. Now what is the entertainment these get from the most part? They can neither move men to one affection nor another; they will neither mourn nor dance. As the children complain of some rude and rustic spirits, that are uncapable of music, and cannot discern one spring⁴⁵⁵ from another, so does Christ complain of a generation of men, they can neither repent nor believe, they care for none of these things. His threatenings and denunciations of wrath are a small thing to them, and his consolations appear also to be inconsiderable. Then souls are otherwise taken up, that they have no sense to discern the transcendent excellency of eternal things. We would then press upon your consciences these three things. First, That the word of God comprehending the law and gospel, contains both the saddest ditties and the most joyful and sweet songs in the world. Next, We would discover unto you the great sin, and extreme stupidity of this generation, of which ye are a part, that ye may know the controversy God hath with the land. And then at length, we would labour to persuade you to the right use of this gospel, and justifying of wisdom, if ye would be his

[596]

⁴⁵⁵ [That is, one tune from another.—*Ed.*]

children.

The law is indeed a sad song and lamentation, it surpasses all the complaints and lamentations among men. Ye know the voice in which it was given at Sinai. It was delivered with great thunders, great terrors accompanied it. The law is a voice of words and thunder, which made these that heard it entreat that it should not be spoken to them any more; for they could not endure the word that was commanded, Heb. xii. 18, 19. Ye would think if they were holy men, they would not be afraid of it, but so terrible was that sight, and that voice, that it even made holy Moses himself exceedingly fear and quake. It made a great host, more numerous than all the inhabitants of Scotland, to tremble exceedingly. And why was it so sad and terrible? Even because it was a law that publishes transgression, for "by the law is the knowledge of sin." If there were no fear of judgment and wrath, yet I am sure there is none that can reasonably consider that excellent estate in which he was once, that throne of eminency above the creatures, that height of dignity in conformity and likeness to God, that incomparable happiness of communion with the supreme Fountain of life; none I say, none can duly ponder these things, but they will think sin to be the greatest misery of mankind. They must be affected with the sense of that inestimable treasure they lost. And how sad a consideration is it to view that cloud of beastly lusts, of flesh and earth, that was interposed between the Sun of righteousness, and our souls, which hath made this perpetual eclipse, this eternal night and darkness! How sad is it to look upon our ruin, and compare it with that stately edifice of innocent Adam! How are we fallen from the height of our excellency, and made lower than the beasts, when we were once but a little lower than the angels! But then if ye shall consider all that followed upon this the innumerable abominations of men, so contrary to that holy law and God's holiness, that hath flowed from this corrupt fountain, and hath defiled so many generations of men, that they are all

bruises and putrified sores, and in nothing sound from the head to the foot,—the soul within becomes the sink of all pollution, the members without the conduits it runs through, and weapons of unrighteousness against our Maker. And what a consideration is this alone, how vile and ugly doth that holy and spiritual law make the most refined and polished civilian? He that hath poorest naturals,⁴⁵⁶ most extracted from the dregs of the multitude, oh how abominable will he appear in this glass, in this perfect law of liberty! So that men would despise themselves, and repent in dust and ashes, if once they did see their own likeness. Ye would run from yourselves as children that have been taken up with their own beauty, but are spoiled with the small pox. Let them look unto a glass, and it will almost make them mad. But if we shall stay, and hear out the trumpet which sounds louder and louder, there will be yet more reason of trembling. For it becomes a voice publishing judgment and wrath, for therein is the wrath of God “revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men,” Rom. i. 18. It speaks much of all men's sins “that every mouth may be stopped,” but the voice waxed louder and louder, the spring grows still sadder, that “all the world may become guilty before God,” Rom. iii. 19. It publishes first the command, and then follows the sad and weighty curse of God. “Cursed is every one that abides not in all things which are written in the law,” (Gal. iii. 10) as many curses as breaches of the law. And what a dreadful song is this! Ye shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power? If he had said, ye shall be eternally banished from God, what an incomparable loss had this been? Men would lead an unpleasant life, who had fallen from the expectation of an earthly kingdom, but what shall it be to fall from the expectation of a heavenly kingdom? But when withal there is an eternal pain with that eternal loss, and an incomparable

[597]

⁴⁵⁶ [Or gifts of nature.—*Ed.*]

pain with incomparable loss, everlasting destruction from God's presence, joined with this, always to be destroyed, and never to be made an end of! It is the comfort of bodily torments, and even of death itself, that it shall be quickly gone, and the destruction ends in the destruction of the body, and so there is no more pain. But here is an eternal destruction,—not a dying, and then a death, but an eternal dying without tasting death. Now consider (if ye can indeed think) what it is to have a law of enmity, and a hand writing of ordinances against us, as many curses written up in God's register against us, as there were transgressions of the law multiplied and God himself engaged to be against us, to have no mercy on us, and not to spare us! Could any heart endure, or any hands be strong, if they would duly apprehend this? Would the denunciation of war, the publishing of affliction, the sentence of earthly judges, would they once be remembered beside this? If ye would imagine all the torments and rackings that have been found out by the most cruel tyrants against men, all to be centred in one, and all the grief and pain of these who have died terrible deaths, to be joined in one, what would it be to this! It would be but as a drop of that wrath and vexation that wicked souls find in hell, and are drowned into, and that everlastingly without end.

But we must not dwell always at mount Sinai. We are called to mount Zion, the city of the living God, to hear a sweet and calm voice of peace, to hear the sweet and pleasant songs of the sweet Psalmist of Israel, and of our glorious Peacemaker, Christ Jesus, the desire of all nations, and the blessing of all the families of the earth. His song is a joyful sound, and blessed are they that hear it. I am come, says Christ, “to seek and to save that which was lost.” I am come to save sinners, and the chief of sinners. Let all these who find their spirits saddened by the terrible law, or who find themselves accursed from the Lord, and cannot be justified by the law of Moses, come unto me. Cast your souls upon me, and ye shall find ease to them. Are ye pressed under the heavy burden of sin and wrath? Come unto me, and I will

give you ease. Put it over upon me. Do ye think yourselves not wearied nor burdened enough, and yet ye would be quit of sin and misery? Do your souls desire to embrace this salvation? Come unto me, and I will not cast you out. Whoever comes, on whatsoever terms, in whatsoever condition, I will in no case cast you out. Do not suppose cases to exclude yourselves. I know no case. Ye who cannot be justified by the law of Moses, come unto me, and ye shall be justified "from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." Ye who have no righteousness of your own, and see the righteousness of God revealed with wrath against you, now come to me, I have a righteousness of God, beside the law, and will reveal it to you. Ye have a band of enmity, and handwriting of ordinances against you, but come unto me, for I have cancelled it in the cross, and slain the enmity, so it shall never do you any harm. In a word, this is the messenger whose feet are beautiful, that publishes glad tidings of peace. This is the Mediator, who reconciles us unto God. The whole gospel and covenant of grace is a bundle of precious promises. It is a set of pleasant melodious songs, that may accompany us through our wearisome pilgrimage, and refresh us till we come unto the city, where we shall all sing the song of the Lamb. What a song is liberty to captives and prisoners, light to them that sit in darkness, opening of the eyes to the blind, gladness of spirit to those who are heavy in spirit! Ye would all think salvation and remission of sins a sweet song. But if ye would discern it, ye would find nothing sweeter in the gospel than this redemption from all iniquity, from sin itself, and from all kind of misery. How lovely and pleasant a thing is that! When Christ hath piped unto you the remission of all sins in his own blood, then he plays the most sweet spring, the renunciation of sin, and dying to this world, by his death and resurrection. Many listen to the song of justification, but they will not abide to hear out all the song. He is our sanctification and redemption, as well as our righteousness. Always to whomsoever he is

pleasant, when he puts his yoke upon them, he will be more pleasant in bearing it. Whosoever gladly hears Jesus singing of righteousness and holiness, they shall also hear him sing of glory and happiness. Those who dance at the springs of righteousness and sanctification, what an eternal triumph and exultation waits on them, when he is singing the song of complete redemption!

Are these things so? Is this the law, and this the gospel? Do they daily sound in our ears, and what entertainment, I pray you, do they get from this generation? Indeed, Christ's complaint hath place here, whereunto shall our generation be likened? For he hath lamented to us and we have not mourned; he hath piped to us, and we have not danced. We will neither be made glad nor sad by these things. How long hath the word of the Lord been preached unto you, and whose heart trembled at it? Shall the lion roar, and the beasts of the field not be afraid? The lion hath roared often to us. God hath spoken often, who will not fear? And yet who doth fear? Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, in congregations every day, that terrible trumpet of Mount Sinai that proclaims war between God and men, and yet will not the people be afraid? Amos iii. 6, 8. Have not every one of you heard your transgressions told you? Are ye not guilty of all the breaches of God's holy law? Hath not the curse been pronounced against you for these, and yet who believes the report? Ye will not do so much as to sit down and examine your own guiltiness, till your mouth be stopped and till ye put it in the dust before God's justice. And when we speak of hell unto you, and of the curses of God passed upon all men, you bless yourselves in your own eyes, saying, peace, peace, even though ye walk in the imagination of your own hearts, add sin to sin, and "drunkenness to thirst," Deut. xxix. 20. Now, when all this is told you, that many shall be condemned and few saved, and that God is righteous to execute judgment and render vengeance on you, ye say within yourselves, For God's sake, is all this true? But where is the mourning at his lamentations, when there is no feeling or

believing them to be true? Your minds are not convinced of the law of God, and how shall your hearts be moved? Christ Jesus laments unto you, as he wept over Jerusalem, "How often would I have gathered thee, and thou wouldst not!" What means he? Certainly, he would have you to sympathize with your own condition. When he that is in himself blessed, and needs not us, is so affected with our misery, how should we sympathize with our own misery! God seems to be affected with it, though there be no shadow of turning in him. Yet he clothes his words with such affections, "Why will ye die?" "O that my people had hearkened unto me!" He sounds the proclamation before the stroke, if it be possible to move you to some sense of your condition, that concerns you most nearly. Yet who judges himself that he may not be judged? The ministers of the Lord, or Christians, may put to their ear, and hearken to men in their retiring places, but who repents in dust and ashes, and says, "What have I done?" Jer. viii. 6. But every man goes on in his course without stop. The word ye hear on the Sabbath day against your drunkenness, your oppressions, your covetousness, your formality, &c., it doth not lay any bands on you to keep you from these things. Long may we hearken to you in secret, ere we hear many of you mourn for these things, or turn from them. Where is he that is afraid of the wrath of God, though it be often denounced against him? Do not men sleep over their time, and dream of escaping from it? Every man hath a refuge of lies he trusts in, and will not forsake his sins.

Again, on the other hand, whose heart rejoices within them to hear the joyful sound? Because men do not receive the law, and mourn when he laments, they cannot receive the gospel. It cannot be glad news to any but the soul that receives sad tidings, the sentence of death in its bosom. Therefore Christ Jesus is daily offered and as often despised, as a thing of nought, and of no value. Ye hear every day of deliverance from eternal wrath, and a kingdom purchased unto you, and ye are no more

affected, than if we came and told you stories of some Spanish conquest, that belonged not unto you. Would not the ears and hearts of some men be more tickled with idle and unprofitable tales, that are for no purpose but driving away the present time, than they are with this everlasting salvation? Some men have more pleasure to read an idle book, than to search the holy scriptures, though in them this inestimable jewel of eternal life be hid. The vain things of this present world have a voice unto you of pleasure, and profit, and credit. They will pipe unto you, and ye will listen unto their sound, but ye know not that the dead are there, and that it is the way to the chambers of hell. These indeed are Sirens⁴⁵⁷ that entice passengers by the way with their sweet songs, and having allured them to follow, lead them to perishing. Here is the voice that is come down from heaven, the “Word that was with God,” and he is “the way, the truth, and the life.” He is gone before you, and undertakes to guide you. He comes and calls upon simple men. The Father’s Wisdom calls the simple ones to understand wisdom, to find life and peace. Will ye then so far wrong your own souls as to refuse it? And yet the most part are so busied with this world and their own lusts, that the sweetest and pleasantest offers in the gospel sound not so sweet unto them as the clink of their money, or the sound of oil and wine in a cup. Any musician would affect them more than the sweet singer of Israel, the anointed of the God of Jacob. Always⁴⁵⁸ these souls that have mourned and danced according to Christ’s motions, and whose hearts have exulted within them at the message and word of reconciliation,—blessed are ye. Ye are of another generation, children of wisdom, ye who desire to hear his voice. “Let me hear thy voice.” O thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hear thy voice, “for thy voice is sweet, and thy countenance is comely.” If this be the

⁴⁵⁷ [See note, page 595.—*Ed.*]

⁴⁵⁸ [In the ancient Scottish dialect as in this instance, *always* is frequently synonymous with *although, however, notwithstanding*.—*Ed.*]

voice of thy heart, blessed art thou. Thou mayest indeed dance, who hath rejoiced in his salvation, or who hath mourned at his lamentation, thy dancing is but yet coming, for his piping is but yet coming. When all the companies of wisdom's children shall be gathered together in that general assembly of the first born, Christ Jesus, the head of all principalities, and in special the head of the body the church, shall lead the ring, and there shall be eternal praises and songs of those that follow the Lamb. They shall echo into him, who shall begin that song of the hallelujah, Salvation, blessing, honour, glory, and power to the Lamb, &c.

Now, whereunto shall this generation be likened, that are not affected with these things? What strange stupidity and senselessness is it, that men are not affected with things of so great and so near concernment? It would require the art of men to express the obstinacy of some Christian professors, or rather a pen steeped in hell. He would be thought unnatural that would not grieve at his friend's death or loss. And what shall they be called that will not sympathize with themselves, that is, their souls? If we speak to you of corporal calamities, and ye could not be moved, it were great stupidity. But what stupidity is it, that men will not consider their own souls? What shall ye profit, if ye lose your precious souls, and be cast away? It is the greatest loss that is told you, and the greatest gain. Your affections are moved with perishing things, every thing puts them up or down, and casts the balance with you. What deep ignorance and inconsideration is it, that ye who can mourn for loss of goods, of children, of health, of friends, that ye cannot be moved to sorrow for the sin of your soul, for the eternal loss of your soul! Other sorrows cannot profit you, but this is the only profitable mourning. If ye were told your sin and misery, to make you despair and mourn eternally, ye had some excuse to delay, and forget it as long as ye can. But when all this is told you, that you may escape from it, will ye not consider it? When ye are desired to mourn, that ye may be comforted for ever, will ye not mourn? We would have you

to anticipate the day of judgment, that ye may judge yourselves, and then ye shall not be judged. What folly and madness is this to delay it till endless, irremediless mourning come, a day that hath no light mixed with darkness! Those that now mourn at that law, and for their sin, and dance at the promises of the gospel, may well be called children of wisdom, and O how may this generation be said to be begotten of foolishness, as their father, and wildness, as their mother! For is there any such folly as this, to lose a man's self absolutely and irrecoverably, for that which they cannot have always? Is there any such folly as to refuse this healing medicine, for the little bitterness which is in it, and then to incur eternal death?

[600]

Now what should we do then? What doth the word of God call you to do? This is it, to mourn and rejoice, and this is to justify wisdom. These two are the pulse of a Christian. According as he finds his grief and joy, so is he. All of you have these affections, but they are not right placed. They are not pitched upon suitable objects. The worldling hath no other joy but carnal mirth, no other grief but that which is carnal, these are limited within the bounds of time. Some loss, or some gain, some pleasure or pain, some honour or dishonour, these are the poles all his affections turn about on. Now then we exhort and beseech you, as ye would flee from the wrath to come, consider it now and fear it. As ye would not partake with this untoward generation in their plagues, so be not like them in their stupidity.

Ye are called to consider your sins and God's wrath, that ye may turn unto the Lord, and then you will hear the voice of peace crying unto thee, "Be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven thee." If ye submit unto the justice of God, or unto the holiness and righteousness of his law in condemning you, you justify wisdom in part, but ye who have justified wisdom thus far, do not condemn wisdom after it. Justify the gospel, in believing upon Jesus Christ. Receive it as a true and faithful saying with your hearts, and this shall justify you. And if ye justify the

wisdom of God in prescribing the righteousness of Christ unto you, ye will also justify wisdom in prescribing a rule of holiness and obedience unto you, and count all his paths pleasantness and peace. Ye must dance at the commandments, as well as the promises, because all God's precepts are really promises. Ye have nothing to do but to believe them as the way, and then to dance until ye all sing the song of the Lamb with the saints above.

Now if ye believe his law and gospel, and be suitably affected with these, ye are led also to sympathize with all the dispensations of his providence. Doth God lament to you in his works as well as his word? O then, Christians, we exhort you to mourn. Yet mourning because of his lamentable providence, should be joined with rejoicing in his word. "God hath spoken in his holiness, I will rejoice." We are a stupid generation, that can neither see, nor hear, neither can we be affected with what we see, nor hear. Do not his judgments go forth as a lamp that burneth, yet who considers? Doth not the lion roar, but who is afraid? Is there not a voice publishing affliction? Hath not God's rod a loud voice, and yet who hears it? Who fears? We do not receive agreeable impressions of the Lord's dealing with us, but every man puts the day of evil far from him. He will not apprehend public rods, till they become personal, and therefore they must become personal. If ye were mourning in a penitent manner, as a repenting soul laments, would not our fast days have more soul affliction attending them? If ye did dance as God pipes in his providence, would not our solemn feasts have more soul rejoicing, and heavenly mirth? Alas for that deep sleep that has fallen upon so many Christians! How few stir up themselves to take hold upon God, though he hides his face, and threateneth to depart from us? For the Lord is with you while ye are with him; if ye seek him, and feareth for him with all your heart, you will find him, but if ye forsake him he will forsake you.