

SERMON XXVIII.

BY THE REV. JOHN SINGLETON, A.M.

SOMETIME STUDENT OF CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD.

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO PREPARE TO MEET GOD IN THE
WAY OF HIS JUDGMENTS OR MERCIES?

Father, glorify thy name.—John xii. 28.

IN this chapter we find the Lord Jesus under two very different exercises: in the one attended with much solemnity, in the other under great perplexity; much courted, much cast down; highly honoured, and exceedingly troubled: and he beareth both with wonderful equanimity. He is feasted at Bethany; (verses 1, 2;) anointed with oil of spikenard, “very costly;” (verse 3;) rideth triumphantly into Jerusalem. (Verses 12—19.) His disciples bless and entertain him upon the way with hosannas; (verse 13; Matt. xxi. 8, 9;) strangers desire to see him, and give him their acknowledgments; (John xii. 20, 21;) and the multitudes throng after him, (verse 12,) and strow his way with palm branches. (Verse 13.) But immediately the scene is changed. As our blessed Lord was not much affected with these things, so, contrary to all expectation, he enters upon a discourse of another nature: “The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.” (Verse 23.) “Why? had he not been glorifying throughout this chapter?” Yea; but not comparably to what he here intends: as if he had said, “My feast, my triumph, my applause, bear no proportion to the glory I am hasting to. These are but dull, low glories to what is at hand. ‘The hour is come,’” that is, “is near,” “that the Son of man should be glorified:” glorified upon the cross, by expiating the sins of his elect; glorified thereupon in heaven at the right hand of the Father.”

Christ had his eye upon a higher glory, which would redound to him upon the performing and finishing [of] our redemption. And a true Christian frame overlooks present comforts and honours from men, and fixeth mainly upon the honour to be received from God, in the way of obedience, here and hereafter.

Nor will our Lord Jesus pass over this meditation till he have improved it:—

1. Inferring thence the fruitfulness of his death: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit;” (verse 24;) alluding to the propagation of his church by his death.

2. The proportionable advantage of the death of his saints for his sake and testimony, and the disadvantage of forbearing and refusing

to suffer for his name : "He that loveth his life shall lose it ; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me ; and where I am, there shall also my servant be : if any man serve me, him will my Father honour." (John xii. 25, 26.)

But passing thence to the consideration of his dreadful agony and passion ensuing, his thoughts are at a stand, his "soul is troubled ;" yea, the extremity of his grief stopped his mouth ; so amazing, so astonishing was the foresight of his sufferings !

At last prayer breaks out : "Father, save me from this hour ;" and is presently corrected : "But for this cause came I unto this hour." (Verse 27.) As if he had said, "I would escape, but must not resist thy will. I would save myself, yet not without a salvo to thy purpose and counsel. I am in a strait between nature and faith, between fear and subjection, between death and duty.

1. *Mere trouble is no sin.*—Christ's soul was "troubled," *ταραχταί*, as water when it is muddied. (John v. 4, 7.) Not that there was any mixture of sin in his trouble : it was such as might consist with his pure, unspotted nature. If grief be not groundless, if not extravagant, not tainted with unbelief, or [the] effect of disobedience ; it is but nature's weakness. Grace induceth no stoical stupidity ; it is no property of the gospel to make men senseless.

2. *Fear of death, and sense of the wrath of God, are of all things most perplexing.*—"Now is my soul troubled." Now I am to conflict with the Father's anger, men's malice, and death's pains and terrors ; and now, not my flesh only, but "my soul is troubled."

3. *Extreme distress of spirit is of an amazing nature.*—Christ had not the freedom of prayer : "What shall I say ?" and then what he did say was corrected. (Matt. xxvi. 39, 42.)

4. *No extremity can ordinarily, or should really, put a holy soul by the plea of or hope in his relation to God.*—Christ calls God "Father : " "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?" (Matt. xxvii. 46.)

5. *Prayer must be suited to the occasion.*—"Save me from this hour," &c. A great argument against most forms is, that a holy soul cannot relish them, nor can I see how God accepts them, because they are impertinent, or not full to the case.

6. *In our extremities we may be importunate, must not be peremptory, with God in prayer.*—Our Saviour here prayed not more heartily than submissively : "Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Matt. xxvi. 39.)

Our text is the result of the Lord's wrestling, both with his own soul, and with his Father. Here is, first, Christ's prayer : "Father, glorify thy name." And the Father's answer in the next words : but I meddle not with that now.

In the text we have two things : 1. *The compellation* : "Father." 2. *The petition* : "Glorify thy name."

1. *The compellation* : "Father." Prayer ought to be ushered in with some suitable title of God, which is expressive of his supremacy,

our reverence of him and relation to him. All these are couched in the single word "Father." Read Matt. vi. 9, 10; Mal. i. 6; Rom. viii. 15.

(1.) This title expresseth *God's authority and Christ's allegiance*, both owned by him in this little word.

(2.) *Relation*.—The Lord's petitioners must ask so as to assure themselves of acceptance; which the recognition of our interest in God, as our Father in Christ, is very proper to effect. (Read Isai. liiii. 16.) Hence the rule of prayer enters with "Our Father;" and it is most suitable to the spirit of the gospel, that believers call God "Father" in prayer, having the Spirit of the Son poured out upon them to this end. (Gal. iv. 6.)

2. *The petition*: "Father, glorify thy name." As if he had said, "Be thou rather glorified, than I spared. If I die, thy glory will make amends for my torment and death." Where note,

(1.) *His submission to the will of the Father*.—He puts himself into his Father's hands, and subjects himself to his pleasure.

(2.) *His design*.—The Father's glory: "Glorify thy name." He doth not say simply, "Let my agony and death come;" but, "Glorify thy name." As though he had said, "This being the means of thy glory which thou hast fixed upon, here I am; do to me as seemeth good in thy sight." Hence observe,

(i.) The best way to quiet and compose our spirits in time of distress, is the prayer of faith. Wrestle with God, and you conquer your own tumultuatings. (1 Sam. i. 10, 11, 18.)

(ii.) That soul will be heard who forgets or neglects himself in comparison, and prayeth for the accomplishment of the will and glory of God. So doth Christ here; and God heard him. (See Heb. v. 7.)

(iii.) Our exemption from suffering may sometimes be inconsistent with the glory of God. "Save me from this hour," saith Christ, "but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name." The ground of the point lies in his correction of his first petition.

(iv.) The best and most effectual means to prepare ourselves to meet God either in the way of mercy or judgment, is to resign ourselves to the sovereign will of God, to be disposed of for his glory.

I. *I shall prove the doctrine.*

II. *Open the nature of this resigned frame of spirit.*

III. *Give some arguments, manifesting that it is our duty, especially in a day of distress.*

IV. *Apply the whole.*

Before I enter upon the first, I lay down this supposition:—That believer who is prepared for affliction, is prepared for salvation; that the same qualification fits for both these dispensations. I know some are "vessels of wrath fitted" only for "destruction." (Rom. ix. 22.) If the apostle did there treat of a moral preparation, (which I know he doth not,) then we must distinguish between destruction and affliction; and of the fitness of the vessels of wrath for that, and saints for this. But to decide this matter: our doctrine and ques-

tion speaks of a holy, gracious preparation for sufferings, to bear them quietly and beneficially; not of a judicial aptitude for ruin, much less an eternal act of preterition, which is the apostle's meaning there. This premised, I suppose, none will deny him who is holily qualified for suffering to be in a blessed readiness for comfortable dispensations and providences.

I. Now, that the above-mentioned *resignation to the will of God for his glory prepareth a soul both for mercy or judgment, suffering or deliverance*, appeareth as follows:—

1. *In that we find holy men of old in this spirit ready for either dispensation,—tribulation or comfort, adversity or prosperity.*

Job shall be our first instance: his resignation is notably expressed: “Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” (Job i. 21.) The good man, upon the first gust of the storm that beats terribly upon him, falls down at the feet of God, acknowledging his sovereignty, and adoring his name. Well, in this frame he met with greater trials afterward; and how did he bear them? See James v. 11: “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.” In this spirit he bore affliction patiently, and received mercy plentifully. God had two designs on Job,—to try and [to] bless him; and Job’s humble spirit equally qualified him for both.

Take David for a second example. By Absalom’s rebellion he was brought to a great strait, that [he] must fly, to prevent the surprise of his person. Now take notice of his frame: “And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and show me both it, and his habitation: but if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.” (2 Sam. xv. 25, 26.) David was not without hopes of being restored to his throne, and yet he had fears of the contrary: but whether God would dispose of him that way or this, he submits to his pleasure, resigns himself to his will; and this prepared him for suffering, and qualified him for deliverance. In Isai. xli. 2, it is said that God “called” Abraham “to his foot;” that is, to an entire subjection to his will. He disputed nothing that God revealed, and refused nothing which he commanded. “What was this for?” Why, to fit him for great trials and mercies. (Gen. xii. 1—4; xxii. 1—3, 10, 16—18.) This was Paul’s frame. (Acts xx. 22—24.)

2. *That frame is most fit to meet the Lord in the way of judgment or mercy, which Christ chose to suffer in, and so to enter into glory.*—In the text this was his case; he was shortly to meet with two contrary dispensations. He was to bear our sin, and to conflict with the wrath of God for it; to suffer the violence of hell and the world, and to die an accursed death: but withal immediately he is to be glorified at the right hand of the Father. Both these he had in his eye in

verses 23, 24, of this chapter. He expected a double glory upon his death: here, by the propagation of the gospel; in heaven, by the exaltation of his human nature. (John xvii. 5.) And both these he looked for. (Heb. xii. 2.) "Well, how will he prepare himself for suffering and glory?" Even by lying at his Father's foot in the text; and now he can grapple with all his enemies, and now he can wait for his reward. (Matt. xxvi. 39, 42, 44.) It was in this spirit that he went to meet his betrayer. (Verses 45, 46.) This all the evangelists mention for our example. Certainly Christ knew what was the best preparation for judgment or mercy, and chose it for himself, and was therein our pattern.

3. *That is the best way to meet God in the way of his judgments or mercies, which himself prescribeth.*—But a resigned, humbled spirit to his will and pleasure is commanded by himself, to qualify us for such dispensations: "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." (1 Peter v. 6.) As if he had said, "Bear my afflicting hand, and you shall feel my supporting, exalting hand."

4. *That is the best preparation for mercy or judgment, which God aimeth at in afflicting, and rewardeth in delivering, his people.*—And this is a resigned frame, an obedient, submissive, subdued will to the will of God. If he afflict his children, it is because they are froward; if he cherish them, it is for the compliance with his pleasure. Ephraim was smitten for his stubbornness, and comforted for his obedience. (Jer. xxxi. 18—20.) God hath no contention with us, but our crossness; because our wills thwart his, and our ways contradict his. First we resist his commanding will by disobedience, and then his chastising will by impatience; and he in his wisdom and love is resolved to bring us "to his foot." Well; if we comply beforehand, when we see the storm approaching, God's end is attained; and he either lays down his rod, or mitigateth the chastisement; yea, he will ere long embrace and comfort broken and humble Ephraim. Indeed this frame supersedes affliction: for judgments upon saints are not to destroy, but subdue them to their Father's will; and if we meet our angry Father in this spirit, he may correct a little, but he will certainly comfort much.

5. *Lastly. A resigned soul meeteth God in the way of judgments or mercies to great advantage.*—They are so far from doing him harm, that they do good; therefore it must needs be a blessed preparation for either. Physic never works so well as when the body is antecedently prepared; nor is any person so certainly profited by judgments or mercies, as he that is ready to entertain them. I know, God can do an unprepared soul good by any providence; but I am sure, none can come amiss to such as be prepared. "What, then, will prepare us to receive chastisements profitably?" The apostle tells us: "Be subject to the Father of spirits, and live." (Heb. xii. 9.) Comply with his will, resign yourselves to his pleasure; and whatever he doeth will be a quickening, improving providence.

II. QUESTION. *What is the nature of this resignation to the will of God for his glory? Or wherein doth it consist?*

ANSWER. I shall reply to this query by laying down something implied in it, and then speak to the proper nature thereof.

1. It *implies* many things. I shall instance only in a few, for brevity's sake.

(1.) *It supposeth a lively exercise of faith.*—For as no unbeliever ever did resign himself freely to the will of God, so no believer, if faith be not in exercise, can do it. Yea, it must be an active faith [that] will enable us to put ourselves into the hands of God, (especially in a day of affliction,) to deal with us according to his pleasure. I say, That soul must have a good acquaintance with and a blessed confidence in Him whom he trusteth with his life and all. Paul therefore tells us, in case of suffering, he “knew whom he had trusted.” (2 Tim. i. 12.) Therefore our Saviour here, when he referreth himself to God, expresseth his faith in that very resignation: “Father, glorify thy name.” He believed God to be his Father, and that his Father loved him; and now he is satisfied that his Father dispose of him. “But I trusted in thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my God.” “What then?” “My times are in thy hand.” (Psalm xxxi. 14, 15.) As if he had said, “It is not only thy prerogative to dispose of me and my days, but I refer them voluntarily to thee.” He put them into the hands of his God, and trusted them with him.

There be many particulars that the faith of a resigned soul is exercised in; as, that God is his God. Faith must have interest in him whom it trusteth. Isaac will suffer his father to bind and sacrifice him. “Why?” Abraham was his father, and God who had given the command for it was his God. (Gen. xxii.) And it believes that all the will of God is good; good in itself, and good for the resigned soul. A believer may know that there may be pain and affliction in suffering according to the Father's pleasure; but is withal assured, it is his good pleasure. (Heb. xii. 10.) And such a soul believes that its God and Father is kind, loving, and tender; that he will not oppress, that he will not overwhelm. He believes that God glorifies not himself to the damage of his people; but that his glory and their benefit are inseparably linked together. Yea, it is in Christ, the Redeemer of the soul, [that it] putteth itself into the Father's hands; and it expects power and strength from its God to bear the sufferings, and carry [itself] through them. When Moses “forsook Egypt” and his interest there, and “chose to suffer affliction with the people of God,” he did this in faith, eyeing “Him who is invisible.” (Heb. xi. 24—27.) And David in the like case was well satisfied in the good will of God to him. (2 Sam. xv. 25, 26; xxiii. 5.)

(2.) *Consequently, it is a high act of love.*—He that loves his Heavenly Father will be disposed of by him. But it must be a love becoming the glorious object on which it is fixed; (Matt. xxii. 37;) a love that prefers his will and glory before all things else; a love in

comparison of which all other love is hatred; (Luke xiv. 26;) a constraining love. (2 Cor. v. 13, 14.) Abraham loved Isaac well. "Why, then, did he offer him up at the command of God?" O, it was because he loved God better. "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." (1 John v. 3.) "What! no command grievous? not self-denial? not bearing the cross?" No; those commands are not grievous, because the soul loves God better than itself. We have a great word, Rev. xii. 11: "They loved not their lives unto the death." "Why?" Because their love of Christ was stronger than self-love. We read of some that followed the Lamb wherever he went. (Rev. xiv. 4.) Into tribulation of all sorts they followed the Lamb. "Why?" Love constrained them. Christ therefore resigned himself into the Father's hands; for he loved his Father. Love will lay the soul at God's feet; love will follow and obey the Father's call in all things; love will keep steadfastly in the way of the will of our Beloved. It argues little love to Christ, when we seek to evade suffering for his name, by finding out carnal shifts. He that loves the Father and Son is, as to the main, resolved into their will.

(3.) To come nearer to my intendment: *This resignation of our wills to the pleasure of God for his glory respects sufferings and duties principally.*—For there is no difficulty ordinarily to comply with the good will of God in distributing mercy and favour. But to have our wills resolved into his in case of difficult duty and hard sufferings, which cross our corrupt nature, and press upon our pampered flesh, is a great work, far above the sphere of an unregenerate person, and a special effect of the Spirit of God in and upon the hearts of saints. But because our subject leads to consider the matter in case of afflictions only, I shall confine my discourse thereto; only adding this by the way,—that where a soul disputeth no sufferings, it submits to all duties. If it be resigned to the will of the Lord in the one, it is subjected to him in the other also.

2. Therefore the resignation [which] I spake of, *consists in several things.*

(1.) *In referring ourselves to the will of God in a day of trial, in the very things we fear.*—Our Lord Jesus dreaded nothing like this hour that was coming upon him. It "troubled" and amazed his very "soul;" (verse 27;) gladly would he be saved from it, had it been consistent with his Father's purpose and honour: yet, all this notwithstanding, he boweth his soul, and prayeth his Father to "glorify his name." (So Matt. xxvi. 39, 42, 44.) His soul trembled at the thoughts of the bitterness of that cup: we find him not reluctant at any foregoing suffering; but this "amazed" him, as Mark expresseth it. (Chap. xiv. 33.) Yet see his resolve: "Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." (Luke xxii. 42.)

Two things in times of trouble we usually start at; yet a resigned soul will refer itself therein to the will of God:—

(i.) *The matter of the trial.*—Very oft we think we could be content to bear any burden but what Providence lays upon us;

carrying it as if God had picked out the very worst of pains and afflictions for us. We would bear sickness, if it pleased God; but cannot away with death. We would lay down our lives at God's feet, but know not to be confined in a nasty gaol. Let God send any thing but poverty, or banishment, or slavery, &c. The meaning of it is, we would suffer according to our own will, not God's. For to corrupt nature any trouble is more eligibile than what Providence fixeth upon. Rachel could die more quietly (as she imagined) than endure the affliction of barrenness. (Gen. xxx. 1.) Though, poor woman! she found that first as hard a task as the second. (Chap. xxxv. 18.)

Was this Christ's meaning, when he prayed the Father to "glorify his name?" Doth he prescribe the suffering, or close with his Father's pleasure? Did Christ say, "Any cup, Father, but this; any death, but this accursed crucifixion?" Nay; but, "If this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." (Matt. xxvi. 42.) O how far are we from this frame, when we complain, "Our lot is worse than any man's!" We think God hath chosen the smartest rod in all the bundle for us. But where is our resignation all this while?

(ii.) *The manner of the trial.*—This is usually disputed. Saul in his despair will die; but scorns to be slain by the "uncircumcised." (1 Sam. xxxi. 4.) Abimelech, too, will die, when he cannot help it; but not by the hand of a woman. (Judges ix. 54.) And we flatter ourselves, as if we were willing to glorify God by our death; only we would choose the way of dying. The meaning is, "God shall be glorified as we please; he shall have the honours, but we will prescribe the manner." Indeed! He owes us much thanks for our kindness! Is this to glorify God? No; he is not glorified but in the way of his will.

(2.) *This frame carrieth in it a resolution of our suffering, not only into the will of God, but his glory also.*—"O," saith our blessed Lord, "I will suffer thy wrath, and men's malice and rage; and say, 'Thine be the glory.' I will endure the shame, and thou shalt have the honour. 'Father, glorify thy name.'" Christ stood not upon his own credit, but the Father's glory. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Cor. x. 31.) Yea, whether ye live or die, suffer or prosper, "do all," suffer all, for "the glory of God." A resigned soul counteth it worth his while to bear any affliction, so God be glorified. Our holy Lord here balanced the glory of God against his sufferings. What a blessed spirit was that of the Baptist! "He must increase, but I must decrease." (John iii. 30.) He began to lose his followers, when Christ entered upon his ministry: but instead of grudging at it or envying him, he is abundantly satisfied that his loss was his Lord's gain. A resigned soul will be base in its own eyes, and be content to be vile in men's sight also, so God be glorified. I know nothing more contrary to the spirit of the gospel, than affectation of reputation to ourselves; nor any thing more Christian, than zeal for and

desire of the glory of God and our Lord Jesus: "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another?" (John v. 44.) Christ aimed at his Father's glory: "I have glorified thee on the earth." (John xvii. 4.)

(i.) *Here, both in doing and suffering, we must design God's glory.*—Our turn comes not to have glory, till we be in heaven. Nay; we must not only aim at God's glory in our suffering, but be willing that he manage our sufferings to that end. He always hath most glory when he orders the whole affair. Christ doth not say, "Father, I will glorify thy name;" but refers himself unto the Father: "Do thou, O Father, glorify thy name." Our sufferings bring God no glory, unless he order them. "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." (Heb. x. 7.) There was nothing of the will of Christ in the case, further than its submission to the Father's will; so must we lay ourselves at the feet of God, and desire him to work out his own glory in and by us.

(ii.) *We must also be willing that he make what glory for himself he pleaseth of us and by us.*—Some think, from Rev. xi. 7, the witnesses would have finished their testimony too soon, and laid aside the sackcloth and ashes before the time. What know we *when* God hath got glory enough by our sufferings? Nay, let us be content to bear as long and as much as he thinketh fit; to be sure, we cannot glorify him too much. Let him carve for himself; when his name hath had glory enough by us, himself will ease us. Did Christ hang back after his agony in the garden? No; but thence he went to meet his apprehenders, thence to the chief priest, thence to Herod, and thence to Pilate again; then to the place of execution, then to the cross, then to the grave. He suffered as long and as much as it was his Father's pleasure. His prayer in the text fixeth no measure nor time, but leaveth the stint to the will of God. Holy Job bare his several afflictions patiently; not one, but all, till God had done. Paul professeth that he was "not only ready to be bound, but also to die for the name of the Lord Jesus." (Acts xxi. 13.) And, "None of these things move me," saith he. (Chap. xx. 24.) "If, when God hath glorified himself by my bonds, he thinks fit to get him honour by my death, I submit." This should check our impatience and weariness in a suffering day. How can we say, "Father, glorify thy name," when we would stint him in the degree and time of our sufferings?

(3.) *This frame submits the season when we shall suffer, to the Father's wise determination.*—This was the dismalest hour that ever Christ saw,—the "hour and the power of darkness;" (Luke xxii. 53;) when hell and the world seemed to have all possible advantages against the Lord. And doth he say, "Father, save me from this hour?" Yea; but he corrects himself, and with respect to that hour puts up his request to the Father in the text: "Father, glorify thy name."

He is so far from contending about the season, that he came designedly to Jerusalem at that time to suffer. (John xii. 1—10; Matt. xx. 18, 19.)

But we are apt to reluct in this case: "O Lord, deliver us from this and that hour, and glorify thyself any time else." Some think, Hezekiah was loath to die, (Isai. xxxviii. 2, 3,) because he was in the midst of his reformation, and the work unfinished. He might possibly think it more for God's glory to live then, than die. "Let me outlive this sickness, escape this persecution, avoid this judgment; and, Father, glorify thyself ever after,"—is our language. But where is resignation to the will of God all this while? One would think, the patriarchs died very unseasonably, (Heb. xi. 13, 14,) when they expected the fulfilling of promises; but, however, they died contentedly. Many of us would gladly be spared to see the resurrection of the witnesses, the fall of antichrist, the return of the Jews, and the descension of the New Jerusalem; and then they think they could say with Simeon, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." (Luke ii. 29, 30.) These desires are good, if attended with submission to the will of God; otherwise rebellious.

(4.) *Though nature shrink, our souls be perplexed, our thoughts disturbed, for fear of the hour approaching; yet our wills must be resigned, our reasoning silenced, our passions resisted, and all submitted to the will of God.*—The Lord Jesus was now strangely perplexed; fear and amazement stopped his mouth for a while: yet as soon as he can recollect himself, this is the language both of heart and lips, "Father, glorify thy name." It may be, we have plausible arguments against drinking the cup; as our weakness, our fear, and, possibly, that to escape would be more for God's glory, that it is a hard case, that we are not ready, &c. Well; but if we would have God glorify himself, reason must be silent, (Psalm xxxix. 9; Lev. x. 3,) and only faith speak; as Christ doth in the text, and Matt. xxvi. 39, 42, 44.

(5.) *This resignation is not only a thought, but a deliberate desire.*—It is Christ's request to God,—nay, he begs more heartily that the Father glorify himself, than that he should be saved from that hour. Christians may now and then use such an expression, by way of ejaculation, as a short prayer,—the result of some close spiritual reasoning in our souls; but can we settle our desire this way? Can we say in time of plague, persecution, or other distress, "Father, glorify thy name?" The Lord Jesus, knowing how much it conduced to the Father's glory, doth not only desire to suffer, but desires it earnestly and passionately: "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke xii. 50.) His heart was bent, bent to glorify his Father; he was therefore angry with Peter for dissuading. (Matt. xvi. 22, 23.) He speaks with a holy passionateness and indignation: "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (John xviii. 11.) And this is recorded for our imitation. "What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus," (Acts xxi. 13,)—was Paul's spirit. "The name and glory of the Lord Jesus are concerned

in my sufferings, and I will suffer his will." We should endeavour not only to be content, but desirous of suffering, when it is for the glory of God.

(6.) Lastly. *This is Christ's last and final resolve.*—He was at first reluctant; but now he fixeth, and changed not till death. Ah! many of us may say now and then, "Father, glorify thy name;" but our spirit alters, our goodness is "as the morning cloud, and as the early dew," that soon vanisheth. (Hosea xiii. 3.) O, but a resigned soul makes it his abiding resolve.

III. The next general is to *allege some grounds on which this resignation is built, and reasons for it.*

1. *We cannot prescribe how God should be glorified.*—Therefore it is fit [that] we be resigned. How have men befooled themselves and dishonoured God in the case of worship! They will invent and prescribe forms and modes, when they have no ground to believe [that] he will accept them. Nothing pleaseth God but his own will. Even in the case in hand we must not dispose of ourselves, and suffer, how, and when, and where, and by whom we please; for this would rather dishonour than credit the cause of God, because it wholly depends upon his pleasure. He hath laid the whole platform and contrivance thereof in his own counsels and purpose; and therein all the several spirits of the mystery answer, and add beauty to each other. Now any thing of our will would deform the rest, and take off from that divine symmetry and concord which render all becoming the wisdom, holiness, power, and sovereign grace of God. And why do we not as well teach him how he should govern the world, as how he should dispose of us? Would it be for God's honour, if we should direct when it should rain, and when shine; when there should be a storm, and when a calm? He that understands not the whole counsel of God, cannot direct any fragment thereof: "Who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?" (Rom. xi. 34.) Nay, is it not most dishonourable, that his creatures should advise him? that dust and ashes should correct his will? (Isai. xlv. 9, 10.) The way of God's glory is the way of his pleasure; (Rev. iv. 11;) into which unless we resolve ourselves, we obstruct his honour.

2. *Because God's glory is most valuable.*—Christ stood not upon his life, in comparison of his Father's glory. What, then, is our life, or ease, or credit, to be laid in the bottom with it? Better the world perish, than God not be glorified. It was made "for his pleasure;" (Rev. iv. 11;) for that end is it continued; and if it be dissolved, that will be the design. See how magnificently the prophet speaks of God: "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering. All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity." (Isai. xl. 15—17.) And shall "nothing," shall we, stand between him and his glory? Methinks we should tremble at our unwillingness to suffer according to his will, consider-

ing how it eclipses his glory. Joshua was more solicitous for God's name, than his own life or all the camp of Israel. (Joshua vii. 9.)

3. *Because Christ hath showed us the way in this most difficult case.*—"Learn of me," saith he; "for I am meek and lowly." (Matt. xi. 29.) Wherein did he express his meekness? See Isai. liii. 3, 7. He neither refused nor murmured, complained nor resisted; he behaved himself most submissly and obediently. Now "learn of" him: lay down passion and tumult in a suffering day, and lie at the feet of your Father. What, did the Lord submit, and may the servant rebel? Nay; "the disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord." (Matt. x. 24.) It is enough to be *like* him. Elijah was content to die, if God pleased. Why? "I am not better than my fathers." (1 Kings xix. 4.) Did the example of the patriarchs move him? Behold, a greater than the patriarchs is here!

4. *Because God hath had his will, and glorified his name, hitherto.*—So he saith immediately after our text.

And must Providence be put out of its course for us? Did not God glorify himself upon and by all our predecessors in all ages? The greatest, the holiest of them gave way to the course of his will; they were sick, imprisoned, poor, strangers, persecuted, and slain, when, by whom, and as he pleased: and what are we, a foolish generation, arisen in this last and worst age, that we should reluct, or murmur, or tumultuate, or be angry or impatient? "My Father worketh hitherto." (John v. 17.) He had not been impeded in his providential will to that day; nor is he yet. And is it fit he should alter his course for us, now at last? This is the Father's own argument.

5. *Because, do what we can, he will glorify his name.*—So himself saith in the words following: "I will glorify it again." Friends, it is fit we consider this matter. When God calls to suffering, this is the language of non-submission: "We will not be persecuted, we will not be imprisoned," &c. But what saith God? "I will glorify it again." Yea, he will do it in spite of us. He did not ask our leave to make us; nor will he, to dispose of us. Non-resignation implies a double contradiction:—

(1.) *To God.*—"My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure," is his resolve. (Isai. xlvi. 10.) "No," saith an unresigned soul; "I will not, I cannot bear it; it must not be; at least, for this once." Vain man! what would become of the world, yea, of the church, if God's will were not fixed? In Zech. vi. 1—3, the providences of God are represented by "chariots:" some "red," importing war; some "black," expressing famine; some "grisled and bay," signifying variety of dispensations; others "white," denoting peace and comfort. Well; all this proceeds from "two mountains of brass," denoting the irreversible counsels of God. Go to, then, vain man; if thou wilt not bear war, or famine, &c., stop the chariots, stay their career, if thou canst; or lead them out of their way; but know, thou must first remove the mountains of brass, and change God's eternal, unalterable counsels. Pray, is it not better to submit willingly, than

struggle in vain? Take heed lest, the more thou strivest, thou be the more entangled. "They lie at the head of all the streets, as a wild bull in a net." (Isai. li. 20.) Never was any thing got by resistance of the will of God, save blows.

(2.) *To ourselves.*—And this is as absurd as the other is vain and atheistical. Have we prayed all our days that "the will of God be done?" If we have not, we are strangers to prayer. (Matt. vi. 10.) If we have, then by refusing to submit to the will of God in suffering times, we contradict ourselves. Now, what an absurdity is it to desire God to do his will, and refuse to submit when he brings his good pleasure upon us! Is this fair dealing? Doth it become reasonable creatures or Christians? May we say and unsay, desire and deny, the same things?

OBJECTION. "But we did not think of suffering, when we put up that petition."

ANSWER. And do we pray we know not or regard not what? Is this to pray in faith? Is it [not] an affront to God, to vent a prayer to him without considering the sense or meaning of it?

OBJECTION. "We were of that mind then; but fear of suffering hath altered our judgments."

ANSWER. And must God change his will, as oft as we vary ours? This were to make him more changeable than ourselves; for whereas we only alter our minds as we think fit, we would have God change as we please, and so make our wills the rule of his.

Besides, what we pray deliberately, we ought to resolve for ever; or else our praying is lightness. To which let me add, that when Christ gave that directory of prayer, he left it as a standing rule, never to be varied.

6. *Because God is our Father.*—Therefore we must acquiesce in his pleasure. This is our Lord's argument couched in the text: "Father, glorify thy name." As if he had said, "I submit to my Father's will. 'The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?'" (John xviii. 11.) Is it becoming our relation to withstand our Father's will and glory? Would you take it well, if your children should rebel, and refuse your correction? And how do you think your Heavenly Father will take your resistance against his? Poor worms that we are, there is no proportion between their disobedience to us, and ours to God. When Saul, though a king, rebelled against the command of God, it is compared to "the sin of witchcraft." (1 Sam. xv. 23.) See how strict the law was in this case upon rebellious children: "If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; and they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among

you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear." (Deut. xxi. 18—21.) What, then, shall our Father do to us, when we refuse his correction? To enforce this argument, consider, we must submit to our Father's will; for,

(1.) *He gave us our being, lives, and all we have.*—And shall he not dispose [of] them? May he not do what he will with his own? (Matt. xx. 15.) Can we, or any thing we enjoy, be better improved than for our Father's glory? "Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." (Rom. xi. 36.)

(2.) *Our Father is our superior.*—It is fit, therefore, [that] we be resigned to his will. "Honour thy father and thy mother:" (Exod. xx. 12:) how much more our Heavenly Father! (Heb. xii. 9.) See David's spirit in the case: "Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child." (Psalm cxxi. 1, 2.) As if he had said, "I will keep within my own sphere; I will not stretch beyond my line, in prescribing to God; but submit to his will, 'as a weaned child,' taken from its dear breasts:" intimating, he would wean himself from whatever God disposed from him. How patiently did Isaac permit himself to be bound and sacrificed by Abraham! (Gen. xxii. 9.) And yet he was of age and strength sufficient to have struggled for his life, being twenty-five years old; but that holy young man abhorred the thoughts of striving with his father. And shall not we resign ourselves to our God and Father in Christ Jesus?

(3.) *Our Father is wiser than we.*—Therefore we should rest in his pleasure. Shall we, who "are but of yesterday, and know nothing," (Job viii. 9,) contradict the wise disposal of the Ancient of days, the only wise God? "My father," saith Isaac, "here is the wood and the fire: but where is the lamb?" "O," saith Abraham, "God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering." (Gen. xxii. 7, 8.) He declares not his design; but Isaac is so confident of his father's wisdom, that he replies no more. It becomes the children of God to esteem their Father's will most sacred: "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" (Rom. ix. 20.) What, though we see not how our sufferings can conduce to our Father's glory? remember, "his thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor our ways as his ways." (Isai. lv. 8.)

(4.) We may well resign ourselves to the will of our Father; for, to be sure, as such, *he would be tender of us.*—"And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, wherof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we

have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." (Heb. xii. 5—11.) We indeed may judge our afflictions dreadful and insupportable; but our Father knows what we can bear, and how he will carry us through comfortably. He will "not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax." (Matt. xii. 20.) This is the reason why he manageth the corrections of his children,—that they may not be oppressed. Read Isai. xlix. 14—16: "But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me."

OBJECTION. "This is a hard saying: who can hear it?" (John vi. 60.)

ANSWER 1. It is hard to untamed, wanton, proud nature, to make the will of God our rule, and deny our own wills; but then how hard will suffering be without it! An unresigned soul in a day of affliction is like "a wild bull in a net, full of the fury of the Lord;" and "like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." (Isai. li. 20; lvii. 20.)

2. But it is easy to a gracious soul, as such. Grace in the heart is the image of God; and this image mainly consists in the conformity of the will to God's will. The scripture calls it, "writing his law in the heart, and putting it in the inward parts." (Jer. xxxi. 33.) Well; and what is the proper natural effect or result hereof? It makes the soul not only obedient in suffering, but to submit with "delight." (Psalm xl. 7, 8.) Now none of God's commands, nothing of his will, scriptural or providential, is "grievous." (1 John v. 3.)

1. Hence I infer that *God is not glorified but in his own way.*—For our wills must be resigned to and resolved into his. If he will that we suffer, it is vain to dream of honouring him otherwise. Suppose we resolve to save ourselves, and make him amends by double and treble duty; we deceive ourselves: "Obedience is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." (1 Sam. xv. 22.) All the manifestative glory of God dependeth on his will. (Rev. iv. 11.) We may extol his power, grace, justice, holiness, &c., and not give him glory, if in the interim we resist his will. It is vain to think of honouring God, and doing our own will: give him all but his will, and we give him nothing. For,

(1.) *His great design is his will.* (Rev. iv. 11.)—He both contriveth and executeth according to it. (Eph. i. 11.) All his word is but his will. (Col. i. 9.) Truth is the analogy of persons, things,

words, and thoughts unto the will of God. And this is his great controversy with men in the world:—they would have their will, and he will have his. And indeed sin is only (and that is enough, and too much) a contradiction of his will. (1 John iii. 4.) And the accomplishment of his will is his glory.

(2.) *In relucting against his will, we contend against all his name and being.*—It is a denial of his sovereignty and prerogative: for what is that but his pleasure? We thwart his decrees; for they are the purpose of his will. We contradict his power thereby, as if he were not able to do his pleasure. Many are our oppositions: we thereby disbelieve his holiness, as if his will were not good; and his wisdom, as if he had not ordered his matters accurately. Yea, we deny his justice by resisting his will, as if he required more than his due. Indeed, his will is the hinge upon which all his attributes move. Disappoint it, and you supplant them all; so absolutely doth his glory depend upon his will.

2. I infer that *God's glorifying his name by our sufferings is not inconsistent with his paternal relation.*—"Father, glorify thy name." If he be our Father, then he loves, then he careth for us, when he afflicteth us: for nothing can deprive us of the comfort of this relation, which is consistent with that relation. Christ in his agony calls him "Father;" (Matt. xxvi. 39;) when he was betrayed and apprehended. (John xviii. 11.) When he was upon the cross, his expression implies as much; (Matt. xxvii. 46;) and he saith no more, when he was risen. (John xx. 17.)

OBJECTION. "There is not the same reason why God should continue our Father in suffering, as that he should be Christ's in his passion; because he is his eternal Son, we only adopted sons."

ANSWER. This objection proves only that Christ hath the first right to his paternity, and we only secondarily in him; but not that he is less constantly our Father than his. Though we be but adopted sons, our adoption is endless, not temporary: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." (Jer. xxxi. 3.) And therefore our Father will be our Father in affliction, and we shall be his children. For,

1. His fatherly love is the reason of his chastisements. He would not scourge and correct his children, but because they are his children. He chastiseth them as a Father; he condemneth others as a Judge. (Heb. xii. 7, 8.)

2. We are heirs of his precious promises even in affliction. It seems, then, his faithfulness to his word of promise is engaged when we are tempted: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (1 Cor. x. 13.)

3. Suffering saints have the image of their Father, when they suffer. Christ's sufferings were consistent with the clouding of his divine nature,—then it did not appear in its glory,—but not with

the separation of it from his human. Saints may be "black" by affliction, but withal they are "lovely" by grace. (Canticles i. 5.)

4. They then stand in most need of his fatherly care and love, and therefore shall not be deprived thereof: "If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail." (Psalm lxxxix. 30—33.) "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." (Isai. xl. 1, 2.) "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee." (Isai. xliii. 2, 3.)

5. Our sonship dependeth on Christ's sonship: if, therefore, God were his Father in his sufferings, he will be our Father in ours. For we are "chosen and predestinated in Christ unto the adoption of sons." (Eph. i. 3—5.) This is the reason why sin itself cannot un-son us,—because we are adopted in Christ; not for our own sake, but his. (Rom. viii. 38, 39.) While we cease not to be Christ's members, we cease not to be the Father's children.

OBJECTION. "But if God be our Father, why doth he suffer his children to be so abused in the world? Can it consist with the love of our Father to see his children imprisoned and slain, &c., before his face, and he not help and save them?"

ANSWER. It is enough that the scripture hath reconciled these things. (Rom. viii. 35—39; Psalm lxxxix. 30—33.) We may as well say, "How could the Father love Jesus Christ, yet bruise him in that dreadful manner?" (Isai. liii. 7—10.) But I add,

1. *That, be the saints never so dear to their Father, yet his own name and glory is more dear.*—Their sufferings being for his glory, he will therefore permit them. Is it fit that he suffer in his name, rather than we in our flesh? or must he lose his glory, to preserve our estates, ease, liberty, or lives? "Nay," saith the Lord Jesus; "Father, glorify thy name." Do any thing with me, rather than neglect thy glory." And see the Father's answer in the following words.

2. *Be his love to his saints never so great, his hatred of sin and his just indignation against it are as great.*—Now here lies the case:—he must either chastise us for our sins, or be unjust; he must either dispense so far with his love as to correct us, or dispense with his righteousness and holiness: and judge now which is most like a father,—to correct a sinning child, or pamper him in sins? (Psalm lxxxix. 30—32.)

3. Hence I infer, that *our peace, ease, joy, estates, liberty, and*

life, are subordinated and must be submitted to the will and glory of God.—Be sure, Christ put these things in their proper place; and, behold, his life and all are resolved into the Father's will and glory. Nor did he undervalue himself or them, in laying them at his Father's feet: certainly he was most tender of that which was most valuable. All the Baptist's credit was to vanish at Christ's appearing upon the stage. Well; did he bustle in his own behalf? Nay, he bare witness that he that came after him was to be preferred before him; (John i. 15;) and being demanded who he was, "he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ." (Verses 19, 20.) What need [of] all this, but that John was tender of the order wherein God had placed him? So, verse 27. O that it were thus with us! that we would lay down ourselves, our lives, &c., at the feet of God, and subordinate them to his glory! that we were willing that he be glorified, though we suffer!

4. *Be we never so great and high, yet our Father must do his pleasure with us, and get glory by us.*—Though Christ "were a Son, yet learned he obedience." (Heb. v. 8.) Yea, he was equal with the Father in nature; (Phil. ii. 6;) yet, having covenanted to be the Father's servant in the mediatory dispensation, "he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Verses 7, 8.) O, "let this mind be in us, which was also in Christ Jesus." (Verse 5.) How was God pleased with Abraham's resignation of his son, his only son, the son of his love, of his age, his darling child! (Gen. xxii. 12, 15—18.) Well; as great as any of us think ourselves, we are not so great as Christ, not so considerable as Abraham; let us be content [that] God should glorify himself by making us little and laying us low in the world. What an abasement was it to Christ to be sold for thirty pieces of silver! See what himself saith of it: "A goodly price, that I was prized at of them." (Zech. xi. 12, 13.) Yet he could bear it in submission to his Father. O that high, proud, lofty, stately professors, who stand upon their greatness, who affect grandeur, would consider this! Certainly the height of Christians is a great part of the controversy [that] God hath with us in this day. Pray, let us bow our spirits and lower our top-sails willingly; for God is bringing us down, and (for any thing I know) he cannot otherwise have his will and glory.

5. *See hence, whither we must drive our perplexities in suffering, if we would conquer them: even to this holy resignation of ourselves unto the sovereign will of God.*

Our Lord Jesus came to no composure, till he arrived at this frame. Compare with the text the foregoing verse. As long as you reluct against providence, expect nothing but tumult: "He resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God." (James iv. 6, 7.) Who so proud as the unresigned soul? Well; if we submit not, God will fight against us; and judge what composure we can then have. When Jonah opposed the Lord's

will, had he any rest? "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me. But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. But the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken." (Jonah i. 2—4.) "He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?" (Job ix. 4.) Till we resign, he will visit our souls with darkness, our bodies with pain, and our matters with frustration and disappointment. A man that will swim against tide and stream and wind, may waste and spend his strength; but, the longer he strives, the more unfeasible his attempt is. So, while you strive against the Lord's pleasure, expect universal disturbance: for when the debate is, who shall yield,—whether God shall abate his will, or we submit ours; we may easily conceive, how bitter, unquiet, and vexatious the contest will be on our part. Well; but come and resign to the will of God, and all will be calm. (Isai. xxx. 15.) There are three things herein exceeding composing:—

(1.) Our spirits and thoughts are now come to a conclusion. Before, there was a contest between grace and nature; *that* would, *this* would not, submit. This created unquietness; but now [that] grace hath got the day, the soul is calm. When there are two armies in the field fighting, all is in a combustion; but when one is conquered, peace ensueth. That which created Christ's trouble, was the struggle between his natural and divine will: now, that being concluded by resignation, he is at rest.

(2.) Now there is no difficulty in our way; for we follow Providence.

(3.) Having resigned, the burden of our suffering is rolled upon God. A resigned soul casteth itself into his arms, as well as submits to his will; and now God is engaged, if not to save us from the hour, yet to help us in and through it.

IV. Lastly. *Let me advise the people of God to take this course.*—If we must suffer imprisonment, loss of goods or liberty or [of] life, let Providence find us in this frame. Well, then; let us be earnest with God, and contend with our own spirits, till we come to this temper, till we can in some blessed measure say with the Lord Jesus Christ, "Father, glorify thy name." Friends, it may be, this doctrine and exhortation will find very slight entertainment with some; but I will promise them, they cannot meet God in the way of his judgments in any other frame. If the Lord Jesus would not venture upon his agony till he had attained it, how shall we be able to meet our sufferings without it?

QUESTION. "It is true this was the frame of Christ; but is it possible for us to attain it?"

ANSWER. Yea, it is feasible. It was not peculiar to Christ, but it is common to his members with him. I have given several instances;

nor doth God oblige us unto impossibilities. There are two things [that] I have to say in the case:—

1. *God gives this resignation sometimes unexpectedly.*—If he surprise a holy soul with affliction, he will sometimes surprise it with submission and resignation. Nay, every believer, in suffering for the name and cause of God, hath the promise of the Spirit, to compose and carry him through. (Mark xiii. 11.) Observe, this promise takes place “in persecution.” What, then? “Take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak.” We must not confine this promise to the Spirit’s management of our tongues only; nay, it extends much more to our hearts and thoughts. If the Spirit dictate our words, how much more will it influence our souls! And I add, The Lord doth not say it shall be given beforehand, but “in that hour.”

2. *This spirit of resignation is ordinarily the blessing of exercise.* (Psalm cxxxi. 1, 2.)—As, in all other cases, grace is given in and upon our endeavour; so in this case. “Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.” (Hosea vi. 3.) “Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart.” (Psalm cxix. 2.) And therefore,

1. *Do what you can to clear up your interest in God.*—This once cleared, submission is in a manner easy. Why did Isaac resign himself to his father? (Gen. xxii. 9.) Because he knew he was his father. “My father,” saith Jephthah’s daughter, “if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth.” (Judges xi. 36.) A dutiful child will not, dare not, cannot, profane its relation by contending with its father. Upon this principle our Lord Christ built his resignation in the text. It is impossible to submit willingly to the pleasure of an enemy; enmity excludes submission: (Rom. viii. 7:) let there be a sense of reconciliation, and resignation will follow.

2. *We must be exercised in the mortification of pride and passion.*—For pride will swell, and passion tumultuate: they who are used to have their wills, shall find it hard, if not impossible, to let God have his without reluctancy. No; self-will will tumultuate against God himself, according to custom. You know how it was with peevish Jonah: “I do well to be angry;” (chap. iv. 9;) with proud Joram: “This evil is of the Lord; what should I wait for the Lord any longer?” (2 Kings vi. 33;) and how with Pharaoh: “And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.” (Exod. v. 2.) They were persons used to have their wills. When the devil desired God to afflict Job, (chap. i. 11; ii. 5,) he presumed that Job, having had much prosperity, could not bear a great cross without flying in God’s face. Consequently,

3. *If we have been inured to sufferings, the task is easier yet.*—“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.”

(Lam. iii. 27, 28.) Paul was accustomed to afflictions; and see what he saith: "What mean ye to weep, and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." (Acts xxi. 13.) "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Phil. iv. 11—13.)

4. *Keep the sense of your own great sinfulness upon your hearts.*—This will stop your mouths, when you would complain of the holy hand of God upon you: "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" (Lam. iii. 39.) "I will bear the indignation of the Lord," saith the church elsewhere, "because I have sinned against him." (Micah vii. 9.)

5. *Christ prayed himself into this frame.* (John xii. 27, 28.)—The more impatient and discontent we be, the more need of prayer. Christ did not tarry till the hurry were over, but cried to his Father while it continued. And observe how he prayed, and what. He prayed brokenly, and uttered the sense and very case of his soul. No matter how abrupt the prayer be, so it be the representation of our hearts. Thus did David. (Psalm lxi. 2.) Where doth he pray? In banishment. When? When his spirit "is overwhelmed." How doth he pray? He "cried." Thus Hannah prayed herself composed. Remember, resignation is the work of the Spirit of God; and therefore you must plead for it, before you have it.

6. *Subdue your carnal reasonings by the reasonings of faith.*—So did holy David: when the flesh had reasoned him into impatience, he "went into the sanctuary," and was composed. (Psalm lxxiii. 16, 17.) And to help in this combat between faith and sense, take these following considerations:—

(1.) *That all things are good from God's will.*—I am sure, all providences be: they are good, because he willeth them: "Thou art good, and doest good." (Psalm cxix. 68.) Himself is good, and [his] will; therefore are his ways good also. No matter what sense and reason say: God cannot do amiss. And therefore Jeremiah lays down this as a principle, before he dare argue about God's judgments: "Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee: yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?" (Jer. xii. 1.) And so David: "Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well-nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked." (Psalm lxxiii. 1—3.) So Hezekiah: "Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken. And he said, Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days?" (2 Kings xx. 19.)

(2.) *That what becomes God to do or order, becomes us to suffer.*—

If God bring the affliction, we may bear it. If it be for his glory, it cannot be for our disadvantage. God will not do what is evil ; and we may very well submit to what is good. (Job i. 21.)

(3.) *It is our folly and brutishness, when there is any impatience of God's will.*—Jonah was mad with passion, when he told God [that] he did well to be angry at the dying of the gourd. (Jonah iv. 9 ; Psalm lxxiii. 21, 22.)

(4.) *That God hath managed as unlikely providences for the good of his people, as these that he is bringing upon us.*—And having such experience of his wisdom and faithfulness, it is reason [that] we submit ; especially having the promise too : “ We know that all things work together for good to them that love God.” (Rom. viii. 28.)

(5.) *That when there is a contrariety of will between two parties, the best, the wisest, the holiest should carry it.*—If either God must not have his will, or we want ours, it is all the reason in the world [that] we should submit, and embrace the cross patiently. Methinks there should be no debate about this matter.

(6.) *That God will be glorified.*—This silenced Aaron ; (Lev. x. 3 ;) and what are we ? This was answer enough to Christ himself in the text ; and are we too good, or too proud, to acquiesce in it ?

(7.) *That God is glorified upon others on harder terms than any proposed to us.*—Our cup is nothing so bitter as the Lord Jesus's was ; nor like that of the primitive Christians, and martyrs then and since. They were scourged with scorpions ; we, in comparison, but with small rods.

(8.) *Lastly. That submission breaks the blow.*—God will not contend with a resigned soul : *Satis est prostrasse* : * but his day falls heavily upon the unquiet, proud, and obstinate. “ With the forward” he will behave himself “ frowardly.” (Psalm xviii. 26.) Read Isai. ii. 11, 12.

As encouragements to resignation, consider,

1. *This frame is a greater blessing than deliverance.*—Christ chose it, rather than that the cup should pass away ; and the Father rather granted it. Certainly what the Father and Son preferred is best.

2. *This once attained, sufferings are free-will offerings.*—Now affliction is not an absolute necessity, but the soul's choice. And what an honour is it to be willing persons in such a hard case ! If we submit “ willingly,” we “ have a reward ;” if not, a necessity of suffering, however, lies upon us,—to allude to 1 Cor. ix. 16, 17. David acknowledged that God put a special honour upon him and his people, when they offered willingly. (1 Chron. xxix. 9, 14, 17.) How much greater honour is it, to offer ourselves to the pleasure of God, in a suffering season !

3. *This is evidently the duty of the day.*—Fear is on every side ; the fury of brutish men is very high : many of our brethren are already oppressed, and bear it quietly. God calls us to resignation to his will in all providences, and aloud by the voice of his word ; and refuge fails us. “ Why ?” That we may have no possibility of

* “ He is satisfied with having humbled it.”—EPI7.

evading this duty. And being [seeing] it is now seasonable, it should be "beautiful" and desirable in our eyes. (Eccles. iii. 11.)

4. *If we resign to the will of God, faith shall be kept alive, and our hold of our relation to and interest in God continued.*—Christ in the height of his sufferings could call God his God, and commit his spirit confidently into his hands. (Psalm xxxi. 5 ; Luke xxiii. 46.)

5. *If we survive and outlive the storm, God will make us eminently vessels of honour.*—"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter i. 7.) What great persons were Abraham and Isaac, after they had resolved themselves into the will of God! "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." (Gen. xxii. 16—18.) Nay, the benefit thereof extended to their posterity for many generations. What a blessed end had patient, resigned Job! (James v. 11.)

6. *If we die in this frame and day according to the will of God, it shall be no loss, but infinite advantage.* (Isai. lvii. 1, 2.)—See it in David and Christ. (Psalm xvi. 8—10.) After Paul had submitted himself to the will of God and the Lord Jesus, (Acts xx. 24 ; xxi. 13,) how confident was he at his dissolution, and in what a triumphant frame do we find him! "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (2 Tim. iv. 6—8.) When proud, unbroken, impatient souls suffer and die in dread and horror, the resigned Christian shall expire in peace and confidence.