

Christless, you are old enough to be damned: there is the small spray, as well as great logs in the fire of hell.

Fifthly, Now, because *your life will be the more eminently useful, and serviceable to God, when you know him betimes, and begin with him early.* Austin repented, and so have many thousands since, that he began so late, and knew God no sooner.

Sixthly, Now, because *your life will be the sweeter to you, when the morning of it is dedicated to the Lord.* The first fruits sanctify the whole harvest: this will have a sweet influence into all your days, whatever changes, straits, or troubles you may afterwards meet with.

SERMON XXXIII.

The fourth excellent Saying of CHRIST upon the Cross,
illustrated.

MATTH. XXVII. 46.

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani; that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

THIS verse contains the fourth memorable saying of Christ upon the cross; words able to rend the hardest heart in the world: it is the voice of the Son of God in an agony*: his sufferings were great, very great before, but never in that extremity as now; when this heaven-rending and heart-melting out-cry brake from him upon the cross, *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?* In which are considerable, the time, matter, and manner of this his sad complaint.

First, The time when it was uttered, “about the ninth hour,” i. e. about three of the clock afternoon. For as the Jews divided the night into four quarters, or watches; so they divided the day, in like manner, into four quarters, or greater hours; which had their names from that hour of the day that closed the quarter. So that beginning their account of their lesser hours from six in the morning, which with them was the first, their ninth hour answered to our third afternoon. And this is heedfully marked by the evangelists, on purpose to shew us how long Christ hanged in distress upon the cross, both in soul and body, which at least was full

* I know these are the words of one in agony, and in the utmost anguish of soul. *Heinsius on this place.*

three hours: towards the end whereof his soul was so filled, distressed, and overwhelmed, that this doleful cry brake from his soul, in bitter anguish, "My God, my God," &c.

Secondly, The matter of the complaint. It is not of the cruel tortures he felt in his body, nor of the scoffs and reproaches of his name; he mentions not a word of these, they were all swallowed up in the sufferings within, as the river is swallowed up in the sea, or the lesser flame in the greater. He seems to neglect all these, and only complains of what was more burdensome than ten thousand crosses; even his Father's deserting him, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It is a more inward trouble that burdens him, darkness upon his spirit, the hidings of God's face from him, an affliction he was totally a stranger to till now; here he lays his hand in this complaint. This was the pained place, to which he points in this dolorous outcry.

Thirdly, The manner in which he utters his sad complaint, and that was with a remarkable vehemency, "he cried with a loud voice," not like a dying man, in whom nature was spent, but as one full of vigour, life, and sense. He gathered all his spirits together, stirred up the whole power of nature, when he made this grievous outcry. There is in it also an *emphatical reduplication*, which shews with what vehemency it was uttered; not singly, my God, but he doubles it, "My God, my God," as distressed persons use to do. So Elisha, when Elijah was separated from him by the chariots and horses of fire, cries out, "My father, my father."

Nay, moreover, to increase the force and vehemency of this complaint, here is an affectionate interrogation, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" Questions, especially such as this, are full of spirits. It is as if he were surprised by the strangeness of this affliction: and rousing up himself with an unusual vehemency, turns himself to the Father, and cries, Why so, my Father? O what dost thou mean by this! What! hide that face from me that was never hid before! What! and hide it from me now, in the depth of my other torments and troubles! O what new, what strange things are these! Lastly, here is an observable variation of the language in which this astonishing complaint was uttered; for he speaks both Hebrew and Syriac in one breath, *Eli, Eli, lama*, are all Hebrew, *sabachthani* is a Syriac word, used here for emphasis sake. Hence we observe,

Doct. *That God in design to heighten the sufferings of Christ to the uttermost, forsook him in the time of his greatest distress; to the unspeakable affliction and anguish of his soul.*

This proposition shall be considered in three parts: The *desertion*.

itself; the *design* or end of it; the *effect* and influence it had on Christ.

First, The desertion itself. Divine desertion generally considered, is God's withdrawing himself from any, not as to his essence, that fills heaven and earth, and constantly remains the same; but it is the withdrawalment of his favour, grace, and love: when these are gone, God is said to be gone. And this is done two ways, either absolutely, and wholly, or respectively, and only as to manifestation. In the first sense, devils are forsaken of God. They once were in his favour and love, but they have utterly and finally lost it. God is so withdrawn from them, as that he will never take them into favour any more. In the other sense he sometimes forsakes his dearest children, i. e. he removes all sweet manifestations of his favour and love for a time, and carries it to them as a stranger, though his love be still the same.

And this kind of desertion, which is respective, temporary, and only in regard of manifestation, is justly distinguished from the various ends and designs of it, into *probational*, *cautional*, *castigatory*, and *penal*. *Probational* desertions are only for the proof and trial of grace. *Cautional* desertions are designed to prevent sin. *Castigatory* desertions are God's rods to chastise his people for sin. *Penal* desertions are such as are inflicted as the just reward of sin, for the reparation of that wrong sinners have done by their sins. Of this sort was Christ's desertion. A part of the curse, and a special part. And his bearing it was no small part of the reparation, or satisfaction he made for our sins.

More particularly, to open the nature of this desertion of Christ by his Father, there being much of intricacy and difficulty in it; I shall proceed in the explication of it *negatively*, and *positively*.

First, Negatively. When Christ cries out of God's forsaking him, he doth not mean, that he had *dissolved the personal union* of the two natures. Not as if the marriage-knot which united our nature to the person of Christ was loosed, or a divorce made betwixt them: No, for when he was forsaken of God, he was still true and real *God-man*, in one person.

Secondly, When Christ bewails the father's forsaking him, he doth not mean, that he *pulled away the prop of divine support* from him, by which he had till then endured the tortures and sufferings that oppressed him: no, though the Father deserted, yet he still supported him. And so much is intimated in these words of Christ, *Eli, Eli*, which signifies my strong One, my strong One. God was with him by way of support, when withdrawn as to manifestations of love and favour. In respect of God's supporting presence which was with Christ at this time, it is said, Isa. xlii. 1. "Behold my servant, whom I uphold:" and John xvi. 32.

“ I am not alone, but my father is with me.” So that this cannot be the meaning of it.

Thirdly, Much less is it his meaning? *that God had left him, as to inherent grace and sanctification*; recalling that spirit of holiness which had anointed him above his fellows: no, when he was forsaken, he remained as holy as ever: he had indeed less comfort, but not less holiness than before. Such a desertion had irritated and made void the very end of his death. And his sacrifice could never have yielded such a fragrant odour to God as it did, Eph. v. 2.

Fourthly, The love of God was not so withdrawn from Christ, as that *the Father had now no love for him*, nor delight in him. That is impossible, he can no more cease to love Christ, than to love himself. His love was not turned into wrath; though his wrath only was now manifested to him as our surety; and hid his love from him as his beloved Son.

Fifthly, Nor was Christ *forsaken by his Father finally*, upon what account soever it was that he was forsaken: no, it was but for a few hours that the dark cloud dwelt upon his soul; it soon passed away, and the bright and glorious face of God shone forth again as bright as ever, Psal. xxii. 1, 24. compared.

Sixthly, and lastly, It was *not a mutual desertion*, or a desertion on both parts; the Father forsook him, but he forsook not his Father. When God withdrew, he followed him, crying, “ My God, my God.”

Yet to speak positively of it; though he did not dissolve the personal union, nor cut off divine supports, nor remove his inherent grace, nor turn his Father’s love into hatred, nor continue for ever, nor yet was it on both parts, Christ’s forsaking God, as well as God’s forsaking Christ: yet I say it was,

First, A very sad desertion, the like unto which in all respects never was experienced by any, nor can be to the end of the world. All his other sufferings were but small to this; they bore upon his body, this upon his soul; they came from the hands of vile men, this from the hands of a dear Father. He suffered both in body and soul; but the sufferings of his soul were the very soul of his sufferings. Under all his other sufferings he opened not his mouth; but this touched the quick, that he could not but cry out, “ My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

Secondly, As it was sad, so *it was a penal desertion*, inflicted on him for satisfaction for those sins of ours, which deserved that God should forsake us for ever, as the damned are forsaken by him. So that this cry (as one observes) was like the *perpetual shriek* of them that are cast away for ever: this was that hell, and the torments

of it which Christ, our surety, suffered for us. For look, as there lies a twofold misery upon the damned in hell, viz. *pain of sense*, and *pain of loss*; so upon Christ answerably, *there was not only an impression of wrath, but also a subtraction or withdrawment of all sensible favour and love*. Hence it is said by himself, John xii. 27. And now my soul, *τὴ ψαυχταί*, is troubled. The word signifies, troubled as they that are in hell are troubled. Though God did not leave his soul in hell, as others are, he having enough to pay the debt which they have not, yet in the torments thereof, at this time, he was; yea, his sufferings at this time in his soul were equivalent to all that which our souls should have suffered there to all eternity.

*Thirdly, It was a desertion that was real, and not fictitious**. He doth not personate a deserted soul, and speak as if God had withdrawn the comfortable sense and influence of his love from him; but the thing was so indeed. The Godhead restrained and kept back, for this time, all its joys, comforts and sense of love from the manhood, yielding it nothing but support. This bitter doleful outcry of Christ gives evidence enough of the reality of it: he did not *feign*, but *feel* the burdensomeness of it.

Fourthly, This desertion fell out in the time of Christ's greatest need of comfort that ever he had in all the time of his life on earth. His Father forsook him at that time, when all earthly comforts had forsaken him, and all outward evils had broken in together upon him; when men, yea, the best of men stood afar off, and none but barbarous enemies were about him. When pains and shame, and all miseries even weighed him down; then, even then, to complete and fill up his suffering, God stands afar off too.

Fifthly, and lastly, It was such a desertion as left him only to the supports of his faith. He had nothing else now but his Father's covenant and promise to hang upon. And indeed, as a judicious author † pertinently observes, the faith of Christ did several ways act and manifest itself, in these very words of complaint in the text.

For though all comfortable sights of God and sense of love were obstructed, yet you see his soul *cleaves fiducially to God for all that: My God, &c.* Though sense and feeling speak as well as faith, yet *faith speaks first, My God*, before sense speaks a word of his forsaking. His faith prevented the complaint of sense; and though sense comes in afterwards with a word of complaint, yet here are two words of faith to one of sense: it is, "My God, my God," and

* It is not in a fictitious and theatrical manner, that he laments his being deserted of the Father; and what some maintain, that he spoke thus, according to the opinion of the vulgar, is a foolish cavil. *Calvin*.

† Mr. Case's Correction, instruction, p. 51, 52.

but one word of forsaking. As his faith spake first, so it spake twice, when sense and feeling spake but once: yea, and as faith spake first, and twice as much as sense, so it spake more confidently than sense did. He lays a confident claim to God as his God; "My God, my God," and only queries about his forsaking of him, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" This is spoken more dubiously, the former more confidently.

To be short, his faith laid hold on God, under a most suitable title, or attribute, *Eli, Eli*, "my strong One, my strong One," *q. d.* O thou, with whom is infinite and everlasting strength; thou that hast hitherto supported my manhood, and according to thy promise upheld thy servant; what! wilt thou now forsake me? My strong One, I lean upon thee. To these supports and refuges of faith this desertion shut up Christ: by these things he stood, when all other visible and sensible comforts shrunk away, both from his soul and body. This is the true, though brief account of the nature and quality of Christ's desertion.

Secondly, In the next place, let us consider the designs and ends of it; which were principally *satisfaction* and *sanctification*: Satisfaction for those sins of ours which deserved that we should be totally and everlastingly forsaken of God. This is the desert of every sin, and the damned do feel it, and shall to all eternity: God is gone from them for ever, not essentially; the just God is with them still, the God of power is still with them, the avenging God is ever with them; but the merciful God is gone, and gone for ever. And thus would he have withdrawn himself from every soul that sinned, had not Christ borne that punishment for us in his own soul: If he had not cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" we must have howled out this hideous complaint in the lowest hell for ever, O righteous God! O dreadful! O terrible God! thou hast for ever forsaken me!

And as satisfaction was designed in this desertion of Christ, so also was the sanctification of all the desertion of the saints designed in it. For he having been forsaken before us, and for us, whenever God forsakes us, that very forsaking of his is sanctified, and thereby turned into a mercy to believers. Hence are all the precious fruits and effects of our desertions: such are the earnest excitations of the soul to prayer, Psal. lxxvii. 2. Psal. lxxxviii. 1, 9. The antidoting the tempted soul against sin. The reviving of ancient experiences, Psal. lxxvii. 5. Euchancing the value of the divine presence with the soul, and teaching it to hold Christ faster than ever before, Cant. iii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. These, and many more, are the precious effects of sanctified desertion; but how many, or how good soever these effects are, they all owe themselves to Jesus Christ, as the author of them; who, for our sakes would pass

through this sad and dark state, that we might find those blessings in it. So then, the Godhead's suspending of all the effects of joy and comfort from the humanity of Christ at this time, which had not ceased to flow into it, in an ineffable measure and manner, till now, must needs be both a special part of Christ's satisfaction for us, and consequently, that which makes all our temporary desertions rather mercies and blessings, than curses to us.

Thirdly, Let us, in the next place, consider the effects and influence this desertion had upon the spirit of Christ.

And though it did not drive him to despair, as the Papists falsely charge Mr. Calvin to have affirmed; yet it even amazed him, and almost swallowed up his soul in the deeps of trouble and consternation. This cry is a cry from the deeps, from a soul oppressed even to death. Never was the Lord Jesus so put to it before; it is a most astonishing outcry.

Let but five particulars be weighed, and you will say, never was there any darkness like this: no sorrow like Christ's sorrow in his deserted state: For,

First, Apprehend, reader, this was a new thing to Christ, and that which he never was acquainted with before. From all eternity until now there had been constant and wonderful outlets of love, delight, and joy, from the bosom of the Father, into his bosom. He never missed his Father before: never saw a frown, or a veil, upon that blessed face before. This made it an heavy burden indeed, the words are words of admiration and astonishment; "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" thou that never didst so before, hast forsaken me now.

Secondly, As it was a new thing to Christ, and therefore the more amazing, so it was a great thing to Christ; so great, that he scarce knew how to support it. Had it not been a great trial indeed, so great a spirit as Christ's was would never have so drooped under it, and made so sad a complaint of it. It was so sharp, so heavy an affliction to his soul, that it caused him, who was meek under all other sufferings as a lamb, to roar under this like a lion; for so much those words of Christ signify, Psal. xxii. 1. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from the voice of my roaring?" It comes from a root, that signifies "to howl, or roar as a lion; and rather signifies the "noise made by a wild beast, than the voice of a man*."

And it is as much as if Christ had said, O my God, no words can express my anguish: I will not speak, but roar, howl out my complaint; pour it out in volleys of groans: I roar as a lion. It is no small matter will make that majestic creature to roar: and sure,

* *Id quod rugitum vocat, non humanam, sed leoninam vocem significat.* Bucer in loc.

so great a spirit as Christ's would not have roared under a slight burden.

Thirdly, As it was a great burden to Christ, so it was a burden laid on in the time of his greatest distress. When his body was in tortures, and all about him was black, dismal, and full of horror and darkness. He fell into this desertion at a time when he never had the like need of divine supports and comforts, and that aggravated it.

Fourthly, It was a burden that lay upon him long, even from the time his soul began to be sorrowful and sore amazed in the garden, till his very death. If you were but to hold your finger in the fire for two minutes, you would not be able to bear it. But what is the finger of a man to the soul of Christ? Or what is a material fire to the wrath of the great God!

Fifthly, So heavy was this pressure upon Christ's soul, that in all probability it hastened his death; for it was not usual for crucified persons to expire so soon; and those that were crucified with him were both alive after Christ was gone. Some have hanged more than a day and a night, some two full days and nights, in those torments alive; but never did any feel inwardly what Christ felt. He bare it till the ninth hour, and then makes a fearful outcry and dies. The uses follow.

Inference 1. Did God forsake Christ upon the cross as a punishment to him for our sins? Then it follows, *That as often as we have sinned, so oft have we deserved to be forsaken of God.* This is the just recompence and demerit of sin. And, indeed, here lies the principal evil of sin, that it separates betwixt God and the soul. This separation is both the moral evil that is in it, and the penal evil inflicted by the righteous God for it. By sin we depart from God, and, as a due punishment of it, God departs from us. This will be the dismal sentence in the last day, Matt. xxv. "Depart from me, ye cursed." Thenceforth there will be a gulph fixed betwixt God and them, Luke xix. 20. No more friendly intercourses with the blessed God for ever. The eternal shriek of the damned is, *Wo and alas, God hath forsaken us for evermore.* Ten thousand worlds can nowise recompense the loss of one God. Beware, sinners, how you say to God now, *Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways*, lest he say, *Depart from me, you shall never see my face.*

Inf. 2. Did Christ never make such a sad complaint and outcry, till God hid his face from him? Then *the hiding of God's face is certainly the greatest misery that can possibly befall a gracious soul in this world.* When they scourged, buffeted, and smote Christ, yea, when they nailed him to the tree, he opened not his mouth; but when his father hid his face from him, then he cried out; yea,

his voice was the voice of roaring: this was more to him than a thousand crucifyings. And, surely, as it was to Christ, so is it to all gracious souls, the saddest stroke, the heaviest burden that ever they felt. When David forbade Absalom to come to Jerusalem, to see his father, he complains in 2 Sam. xiv. 32. "Wherefore, (saith he) " am I come from Geshur, if I may not see the king's " face?" So doth the gracious soul bemoan itself; Wherefore am I redeemed, called, and reconciled, if I may not see the face of my God?

It is said of Tully, when he was banished from Italy, and of Demosthenes, when he was banished from Athens, that they wept every time they looked towards their own country: and, is it strange that a poor deserted believer should mourn every time he looks heaven-ward? Say, Christian, did the tears never trickle down thy cheeks when thou lookedst towards heaven, and couldst not see the face of thy God, as at other times? If two dear friends cannot part, though it be but for a season, but that parting must be in a shower; blame not the saints if they sigh and mourn bitterly when the Lord, who is the life of their life, depart, though but for a season, from them; for if God depart, their sweetest enjoyment on earth, the very crown of all their comforts is gone, and what will a king take in exchange for his crown? What can recompense a saint for the loss of his God! Indeed, if they had never seen the Lord, or tasted the incomparable sweetness of his presence, it were another matter; but the darkness which follows the sweetest light of his countenance, is double darkness.

And that which doth not a little increase the horror of this darkness is, that when their souls were thus benighted, and the sun of their comfort is set; then doth Satan, like the wild beasts of the desert, creep out of his den, and roar upon them with hideous temptations. Surely this is a sad state, and deserves tender pity! Pity is a debt due to the distressed, and the world shews not a greater distress than this. If ever you have been in troubles of this kind yourselves, you will never slight others in the same case: nay, one end of God's exercising you with troubles of this nature, is to teach you compassion towards others in the same case. Do they not cry to you, as Job xix. 21. "Have pity, have pity upon me, " O ye my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me." Draw forth bowels of mercy and tender compassion to them; for, either you have been, or are, or may be in the same case yourselves: however, if men do not, to be sure, Christ, that hath felt it before them, and for them, will pity them.

Inf. 3. Did God really forsake Jesus Christ upon the cross? *Then from the desertion of Christ, singular consolation springs up to the people of God; yea, manifold consolation.* Principally it is a support

in these two respects, as it is preventive of your final desertion and a comfortable pattern to you in your present sad desertions.

First, Christ's desertion is preventive of your final desertion: because he was forsaken for a time, you shall not be forsaken for ever: for he was forsaken for you: and God's forsaking him, though but for a few hours, is equivalent to his forsaking you for ever. It is every way as much for the dear Son of God, the darling delight of his soul, to be forsaken of God for a time; as if such a poor inconsiderable thing as thou art, should be cast off to eternity. Now this being equivalent, and borne in thy room, must needs give thee the highest security in the world, that God will never finally withdraw from thee: had he intended to have done so, Christ had never made such a sad outcry as you hear this day, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Secondly, Moreover, this sad desertion of Christ becomes a comfortable *pattern* to poor deserted souls in divers respects: and the proper business of such souls, at such times, is to eye it believingly, in these six respects.

First, Though God deserted Christ, yet at the same time he powerfully supported him: his omnipotent arms were under him, though his pleased face was hid from him: he had not indeed his smiles, but he had his supports. So, Christian, just so shall it be with thee: thy God may turn away his face, but he will not pluck away his arm. When one asked holy Mr. Baines, how the case stood with his soul, he answered, *supports* I have, though *suavities* I want. Our father, in this, deals with us, as we ourselves sometimes do with a child that is stubborn and rebellious. We turn him out of doors, and bid him begone out of our sight: and there he sighs and weeps; but however, for the humbling of him, we will not presently take him into house and favour: yet we order, or at least, permit the servants to carry him meat and drink. Here is fatherly care and support: though no former smiles, or manifested delights.

Secondly, Though God deserted Christ, yet he deserted not God: his Father forsook him, but he could not forsake his Father, but followed him with this cry, "My God my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

And is it not even so with you? God goes off from your souls, but you cannot go off from him. No, your hearts are mourning after the Lord, seeking him carefully with tears: complaining of his absence, as the greatest evil in this world. This is Christ-like: so it was with the spouse, Cant. iii. 1, 2. Her beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone; but was she content to part with him so? No such thing. "By night, on my bed, I sought him

“whom my soul loveth; I sought him, but I found him not; I will arise now, and go about the city,” &c.

Thirdly, Though God forsook Christ, yet he returned to him again. It was but for a time, not for ever. In this also doth his desertion parallel yours. God may, for several wise and holy reasons, hide his face from you, but not so as it is hid from the damned, who shall never see it again. This cloud will pass away; this night shall have a bright morning: “For (saith thy God) I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth; for the spirit shall fail before me, and the souls which I have made.” As if he should say, I may contend with him for a time, to humble him, but not for ever, lest, instead of a sad child, I should have a dead child. Oh the tenderness even of a displeased father!

Fourthly, Though God forsook Christ, yet at that time he could justify God. So you read, Psal. xxii. 2, 3. “O my God (saith he) I cry in the day-time, but thou hearest not; and in the night-season, and am not silent: but thou art holy.” Is not thy spirit, according to the measure, framed like Christ’s in this; canst thou not say, even when he writes bitter things against thee, he is a holy, faithful, and good God for all this? I am deserted but not wronged. There is not one drop of injustice in all the sea of my sorrows. Though he condemn me, I must, and will justify him; this also is Christ-like.

Fifthly, Though God took from Christ all visible and sensible comforts, inward as well as outward; yet Christ subsisted, by faith, in the absence of them all: his desertion put him upon the acting of his faith. *My God, my God*, are words of faith; the words of one that wholly depends upon his God: and is it not so with you too? Sense of love is gone, sweet sights of God shut up in a dark cloud? well, what then? must thy hands presently hang down, and thy soul give up all its hopes? what! is there no faith to relieve in this case? Yes, yes, and blessed be God for faith. “Who is among you that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voice of his servants, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light; let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himself upon his God,” Isa. l. 10. To conclude,

Sixthly, Christ was deserted, a little before the glorious morning of light and joy dawned upon him. It was a little, a very little while, after this sad cry, before he triumphed gloriously; and so it may be with you: heaviness may endure for a night, but joy and gladness will come in the morning. You know how Mr. Glover was transported with joy, and cried out, as a man in a rapture, O Austin! he is come, he is come, he is come, meaning the Comforter, who for some time had been absent from his soul.

But, I fear I am absolutely and finally forsaken.

Why so? Do you find the characters of such a desertion upon your soul? Be righteous judges, and tell me, whether you find an heart willing to forsake God? Is it indifferent to you whether God ever return again or no? Are there no mournings, meltings, or thirstings after the Lord? Indeed, if you forsake him, he will cast you off for ever; but can you do so? Oh, no, let him do what he will, I am resolved to wait for him, cleave to him, mourn after him, though I have no present comfort from him, no assurance of my interest in him; yet will I not exchange my poor weak hopes for all the good in this world.

Again, you say God hath forsaken you, but hath he *let loose the bridle before you*? To allude to Job xxx. 11. Hath he taken away from your souls all conscientious tenderness of sin, so that now you can sin freely, and without any regret? If so, it is a sad token indeed: tell me, soul, if thou, indeed, judgest God will never return in loving-kindness to thee any more; why dost thou not then give thyself over to the pleasures of sin, and fetch thy comforts that way, from the creature, since thou canst have no comfort from thy God? Oh, no, I cannot do so; if I die in darkness and sorrow, I will never do so: my soul is as full of fear and hatred of sin as ever, though empty of joy and comfort. Surely, these are no tokens of a soul finally abandoned by its God.

Inf. 4. Did God forsake his own Son upon the cross; *Then the dearest of God's people may, for a time, be forsaken of their God.* Think it not strange, when you, that are the children of light, meet with darkness, yea, and walk in it; neither charge God foolishly; nor say he deals hardly with you. You see what befel Jesus Christ, whom his soul delighted in: It is doubtless your concernment to expect and prepare for days of darkness. You have heard the doleful cry of Christ, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" You know how it was with Job, David, Heman, Asaph, and many others, the dear servants of God, what heart-melting lamentations they had made upon this account; and are you better than they? Oh, prepare for spiritual troubles; I am sure you do enough every day to involve you in darkness. Now, if at any time this trial befall you, mind these two seasonable *admonitions*, and lay them up for such a time.

Admonition 1. First, *Exercise the faith of adherence, when you have lost the faith of evidence.* When God takes away that, he leaves this: that is necessary to the comfort, this to the life of his people. It is sweet to live in views of your interest, but if they be gone, believe and rely on God, for an interest. Stay yourselves on your God when you have no light, Isa. l. 10. Drop this

anchor in the dark, and do not reckon all gone when evidence is gone: never reckon yourselves undone whilst you can adhere to your God. Direct acts are noble acts of faith, as well as reflexive ones; yea, and in some respects to be preferred to them. For,

First, As your comfort depends on the evidencing acts of faith, so your salvation upon the adhering act of faith. Evidence comforts, affiance saves you; and, sure, salvation is more than comfort.

Secondly, Your faith of evidence hath more sensible sweetness, but your faith of adherence is of more constancy and continuance: the former is as a flower in its month, the latter sticks by you all the year.

Thirdly, Faith of evidence brings more joy to you, but faith of adherence brings more glory to God: for thereby you trust him when you cannot see him; yea, you believe not only without, but against sense and feeling; and, doubtless, that which brings glory to God, is better than that which brings comfort to you. O then exercise this, when you have lost that.

Admonition 2. *Secondly*, *Take the right method to recover the sweet light which you have sinned away from your souls.* Do not go about from one to another complaining; nor yet sit down desponding under your burden. But,

First, Search diligently after the cause of God's withdrawalment: urge him hard, by prayer, to tell thee wherefore he contends with thee, Job x. 2. Say, Lord, what have I done that so offends thy Spirit? What evil is it which thou so rebukest? I beseech thee shew me the cause of thine anger: have I grieved thy Spirit in this thing, or in that? Was it my neglect of duty, or my formality in duties? Was I not thankful for the sense of thy love, when it was shed abroad in my heart? O Lord, why is it thus with me?

Secondly, Humble your souls before the Lord for every evil you shall be convinced of: tell him, it pierces your hearts that you have so displeased him, and that it shall be a caution to you, whilst you live, never to return again to folly: invite him again to your souls, and mourn after the Lord till you have found him: If you seek him, he will be found of you, 2 Cor. xv. 2. It may be you shall have a thousand comforters come about your sad souls, in such a time to comfort them: this will be to you instead of God, and that will repair your loss of Christ: despise them all, and say, I am resolved to sit as a widow till Christ return; he, or none, shall have my love.

Thirdly, Wait on in the use of means till Christ return. O be not discouraged; though he tarry, wait you for him; for, *blessed are all they that wait for him.*