

curse, and leave a blessing in those conditions, against the time that you should come into them. Moreover,

Thirdly, Though inward comforts and outward comforts were both removed from Christ, in one day, yet he wanted not support in the absence of both. How relieving a consideration is this! John xvi. 32. "Behold, (saith he) the hour cometh, yea, is now "come that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall "leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is "with me." With me by way of support, when not by way of comfort. Thy God, Christian, can in like manner support thee, when all sensible comforts shrink away together from thy soul and body in one day.

Lastly, It deserves a remark, that this comfortless forsaken condition of Christ, immediately preceded the day of his greatest glory and comfort. Naturalists observe, the greatest darkness is a little before the dawning of the morning. It was so with Christ, it may be so with thee. It was but a little while and he had better company than theirs that forsook him. Act therefore your faith upon this, that the most glorious light usually follows the thickest darkness. The louder your groans are now, the louder your triumphs hereafter will be. The horror of your present, will but add to the lustre of your future state.



SERMON XXIX.

Of the manner of CHRIST'S Death, in respect of the Patience thereof.

ISA. liii. 7.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.

HOW our Lord Jesus Christ carried on the work of our redemption in his humble state, both in his incarnation, life, and death, hath in part been discovered in the former sermons. I have shewed you the kind or nature of that death he died; and am now engaged, by the method proposed, to open the manner of his death. The solitariness or loneliness of Christ in his sufferings, was the subject of the last sermon. The patience and meekness of Christ in his sufferings, come in order, to be opened in this.

This chapter treats wholly of the sufferings of Christ, and the

blessed fruits thereof. Hornbeck * tells us of a learned Jew, “that ingenuously confessed this very chapter converted him to the Christian faith. And such delight he had in it, that he read it more than a thousand times over.” Such is the clearness of this prophecy, that he who penned it, is deservedly stiled the evangelical prophet. I cannot allow time to annalize the chapter; but my work lying in the seventh verse, I shall speak to these two branches or parts of it, viz. The grievous sufferings of Christ, and the glorious ornament he put upon them.

First, Christ’s grievous sufferings; “he was afflicted, and he was oppressed, brought to the slaughter, and shorn as a sheep,” i. e. he lost both fleece and blood, life, and comforts of life. “He was oppressed;” the † word signifies both “to answer and oppress, humble or depress.” The other word, rendered *afflicted*, signifies “to exact and afflict,” and so implies Christ to stand before God, as a surety before the creditor; who exacts the utmost satisfaction from him, by causing him to suffer according to the utmost rigour and severity of the law. It did not suffice that he was shorn as a sheep, i. e. that he was stripped and deprived of his riches, ornaments and comforts; but his blood and life must go for it also. He is brought to the slaughter. These were his grievous sufferings.

Secondly, Here is the glorious ornament he put upon those grievous sufferings, even the ornament of a meek and patient spirit. *He opened not his mouth*: but went as a *sheep* to be shorn, or a *lamb to the slaughter*. The lamb goes as quiet to the slaughter-house, as to the fold. By this lively and lovely similitude, the patience of Christ is here expressed to us ‡. Yet Christ’s dumbness and silence is not to be understood simply, but universally; as though he spake nothing at all when he suffered; for he uttered many excellent and weighty words upon the cross, as you shall hear in the following discourses; but it must be understood respectively, i. e. he never opened his mouth repiningly, passionately, or revengefully, under his greatest tortures and highest provocations. Whence the note is,

Doct. *That Jesus Christ supported the burden of his sufferings, with admirable patience and meekness of spirit.*

It is a true observation, that meekness inviteth injury, but always to its own cost. And it was evidently verified in the suffer-

* *Ingenue profiteor illud ipsum caput ad fidem Christianam me adduxisse, nam plus miles illud caput perlegi.* Hornbeck contra Jud. lib. 6. cap. 1. p. 108.

† *נענה* Respondit. *Humiliavit.* *Demisit.* *Depressit.* *עצב* Exegit. Buxtorf.

‡ That he may the more commend Christ’s patience and meekness, as his glorious ornament, he compares him to a sheep and a lamb. *Martort in loc.*

ings of Christ. Christ's meekness triumphed over the affronts and injuries of his enemies, much more than they triumphed over him. Patience never had a more glorious triumph, than it had upon the cross.

The meekness and patience of his spirit, amidst injuries and provocations, is excellently set forth in 1 Pet. ii. 22, 23. "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."

In this point we have these three things to open doctrinally.

1. The burden of sufferings, and provocations that Jesus Christ was oppressed with.

2. The meekness and admirable patience with which he supported that burden.

3. The causes and grounds of that perfect patience which he then exercised.

First, The burden of sufferings and provocations which Christ supported, was very great; for on him met all sorts and kinds of trouble at once, and those in their highest degrees and fullest strength. Troubles in his soul, and these were the soul of his troubles. His soul was laden with spiritual horrors and troubles, as deep as it could swim, Mark xiv. 33. "He began to be sore amazed and very heavy." The wrath of an infinite dreadful God beat him down to the dust. His body full of pain and exquisite tortures in every part. Not a member or sense but was the seat and subject of torment.

His name and honour suffered the vilest indignities, blasphemies, and horrid reproaches that the malignity of Satan and wicked men could belch out against it. He was called a blasphemer, seditious, one that had a devil, a glutton, a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and harlots, the carpenter's son, this fellow. He that was *God's fellow*, as you heard lately, now *this fellow*. Contempt was poured upon all his offices. Upon his kingly office, when they crowned him with thorns, arrayed him with purple, bowed the knee in mockery to him and cried, "Hail king of the Jews." His prophetic office, when they blinded him, and then bid him "prophesy who smote him." His priestly office, when they reviled him on the cross, saying, "He saved others, himself he cannot save." They scourged him, spit in his face; and smote him on the head and face. Besides, the very kind of death they put him to, was reproachful and ignominious; as you heard before.

Now all this, and much more than this, meeting at once upon an innocent and dignified person; one that was greater than all; that lay in the bosom of God; and from eternity had his smiles

and honours; upon one that could have crushed all his enemies as a moth; I say, for him to bear all this, without the least discomposure of spirit, or breach of patience, is the highest triumph of patience that ever was in the world. It was one of the greatest wonders of that wonderful day:

Secondly, And that is the next thing we have to consider, even this almighty patience and unpatterned meekness of Christ, supporting such a burden with such evenness and steadiness of spirit. Christian patience, or the grace of patience, *is an ability or power to suffer hard and heavy things, according to the will of God.*

It is a power, and a glorious power, that strengthens the suffering soul to *bear*. It is our passive fortitude, Col. i. 11. "Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience, and long-suffering with joyfulness;" i. e. strengthened with the might or power of God himself: Or such as might appear to be the proper impress and image of that divine power, which is both its principle and pattern. For the patience which God exercises towards sinners, that daily wrong and load him, is called power, and great power, Numb. xiv. 17. "Let the power of my Lord be great, as thou hast spoken, saying, The Lord is long-suffering, forgiving," &c. Hence it is observed, Prov. xxiv. 10. That the loss or breaking of our patience under adversity, argues a decay of strength in the soul. "If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small."

It is a power or ability in the soul, *to bear hard, heavy, and difficult things* *. Such only are the objects of patience. God hath several sorts of burdens to impose upon his people. Some heavier, others lighter; some to be carried but a few hours, others many days; others all our days: some more spiritual, bearing upon the soul; some more external, touching or punishing the flesh immediately; and the spirit by way of sympathy: and sometimes both sorts are laid on together. So they were at this time on Christ. His soul burdened as deep as it could swim; full of the sense, the bitter sense and apprehension of the wrath of God: his body filled with tortures: in every member and sense grief took up its lodging. Here was the highest exercise of patience.

It is a power to bear hard and heavy things, *according to the will of God*. Considering it in that respect, patience, the Christian grace, differs from patience the moral virtue. So the apostle describes it, 1 Pet. iv. 19. "Let them that suffer according to the will of God," &c. i. e. who exercise patience graciously, as God would have them.

* These two virtues, viz. *υπερομονη*, i. e. patience, and *μακροθυμια*, i. e. meekness, are inseparable concomitants of that strength and fortitude, which the Spirit bestows on us *Daven.*

And then our patience is, as Christ's most exactly was, according to the will of God; when it is as extensive, as intensive, and as protensive as God requires it to be.

First, When it is as *extensive*, as God would have it. So was Christ's patience. It was a patience that stretched and extended itself to all, and every trouble and affliction, that came upon him. Troubles came upon him in troops, in multitudes. It is said, Psal. xl. 12. "Innumerable evils have compassed me about." Yet he found patience enough to receive them all. It is not with us. Our patience is often worn out. And like sick people, we fancy, if we were in another chamber, or bed, it would be better. If it were any other trouble than this, we could bear it. Christ had no exceptions at any burden his Father would lay on. His patience was as large as his trouble, and that was large indeed.

Secondly, It is then according to the will of God, when it is as *intensive* as God requires it to be, i. e. in the apostle's phrase, Jam. i. 4. When it hath its *perfect work*, or exercise; when it is not only extended to all kinds of troubles; but when it works in the highest and most perfect degree. And then may patience be said to be perfect (as it was in Christ) when it is *plenum sui, et prohibens alieni*, full of itself, and exclusive of its opposite. Christ's patience was full of itself, (i. e.) it included all that belonged to it. It was full of submission, peace, and serenity; full of obedience and complacency in his Father's will. He was in a perfect calm. As a lamb or sheep, (saith the text) that howls not, opposes not, but is dumb and quiet. And as his external behaviour, so his internal frame and temper of soul was most serene and calm. Not one repining thought against God. Not one revengeful thought against man once ruffled his spirit, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do," was all the hurt he wished his worst enemies. And as it included all that belonged to it, so his perfect patience excluded all its opposites. No discontents, murmurings, despondencies had place in his heart. So that his patience was a most intensive, perfect patience. And as it was as extensive, and as intensive, so it was,

Thirdly, As *protensive* as God required it to be, (i. e.) it held out to the end of his trial. He did not faint at last. His troubles did not out-live his patience. He indeed was strengthened with all might unto all patience, and long-suffering. This was the patience of Christ our perfect pattern. He had not only patience but longanimity.

Thirdly, In the last place, let us inquire into the grounds and reasons of this his most perfect patience. And if you do so, you shall find perfect holiness, wisdom, fore-knowledge, faith, heaven-

ly-mindedness, and obedience, at the root of this perfect patience.

First, This admirable patience and meekness of Christ, was the fruit and offspring of his *perfect holiness*. His nature was free from those corruptions, that ours groan and labour under; otherwise he could never have carried it at this rate. Take the meek Moses who excelled all others in that grace, and let him be tried in that very grace, wherein he excels, and see how "unadvisedly he may speak with his lips," Psal. cvi. 33. Take a Job, whose famous patience is trumpeted and resounded over all the world; *ye have heard of the patience of Job*; and let him be tried by outward and inward troubles, meeting upon him in one day; and even a Job may curse the day wherein he was born. Envy, revenge, discontent, despondencies, are weeds naturally springing up in the corrupt soil of our sinful natures, "I saw a little child grow pale with envy," said Austin*. And the spirit that is in us, lusteth unto envy, (saith the apostle) Jam. iv. 5. The principles of all these evils being in our natures, they will shew themselves in time of trial. The old man is fretful and passionate. But it was otherwise with Christ. His nature was like a pure chrystal glass, full of pure fountain water, which though shaken and agitated never so much, cannot shew, because it hath no dregs. "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me," John xiv. 30. No principle of corruption, for a handle to temptation. Our high-priest was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, Heb. vii. 26.

Secondly, The meekness and patience of Christ proceeded from the *infinite wisdom* with which he was filled. The wiser any man is, the more patient he is. Hence meekness, the fruit, is denominated from patience, the root that bears it, Jam. iii. 13. "The meekness of wisdom." And anger is lodged in folly, its proper cause, Eccl. vii. 9. "Anger resteth in the bosom of fools." Seneca † would allow no place for passion in a wise man's breast. Wise men use to ponder, consider, and weigh things deliberately in their judgments, before they suffer their affections and passions to be stirred and enraged. Hence come the constancy and serenity of their spirits. As wise Solomon hath observed, Prov. xvii. 27. "A man of understanding is of an excellent (or as the Hebrew is) a cool, spirit."

Now wisdom filled the soul of Christ. He is wisdom in the ab-

* *Vidi zelantem parvulum.* Aug.

† If we believe that neither great, nor frequent anger, takes place in the mind of the wise man; why may we not free him from the whole of this passion. *Seneca on passion.*

stract, Prov. viii. In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom, Col. ii. 3. Hence it was that he was no otherwise moved with the revilings and abuses of his enemies, than a wise physician is with the impertinencies of his distempered, and crazy patient.

Thirdly, And as his patience flowed from his perfect wisdom and knowledge, so also from his *fore-knowledge*. He had a perfect prospect of all those things from eternity, which befel him afterwards. They came not upon him by way of surprisal. And therefore he wondered not at them when they came, as if some strange thing had happened. He foresaw all these things long before, Mark viii. 31. "And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed." Yea, he had compacted and agreed with his Father to endure all this for our sakes, before he assumed our flesh. Hence, Isa. l. 6. "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. I hid not my face from shame and spitting."

Now look as Christ in John xvi. 4. obviates all future offences his disciples might take at suffering for his sake, by telling them before-hand what they must expect. "These things (saith he) I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them." So he, foreknowing what himself must suffer, and having agreed so to do, bare those sufferings with singular patience. "Jesus therefore knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, whom seek ye?" John xviii. 4.

Fourthly, As his patience sprang from his fore-knowledge of his sufferings; so from his faith which he exercised under all that he suffered in this world. His faith looked through all those black and dismal clouds, to the joy proposed, Heb. xii. 2. He knew that though Pilate condemned, God would justify him, Isa. l. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. And he set one over-against the other: he balanced the glory, into which he was to enter, with the sufferings, through which he was to enter into it. He acted faith upon God for divine support and assistance under suffering, as well as for glory, the fruit and reward of them, Psal. xvi. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. *I have set* (or as the apostle varies it) "I foresaw the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth." There is faith acted by Christ, for strength to carry him through. And then it follows, "My flesh also shall rest in hope; for thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life. In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right-hand there are pleasures for evermore." There is his faith acting upon the glory

into which he was to enter, after he had suffered these things : this filled him with peace.

Fifthly, As his faith, eyeing the glory into which he was passing, made him endure all things ; so *the heavenliness* of his Spirit also filled him with a heavenly tranquillity and calmness of spirit under all his abuses and injuries. It is a certain truth, that the more heavenly any man's spirit is, the more sedate, composed and peaceful. "As the higher heavens (saith * Seneca) are more ordinate and tranquil ; there are neither clouds nor winds, storms nor tempests ; they are the inferior heavens that lighten and thunder : the nearer the earth the more tempestuous and unquiet : even so the sublime and heavenly mind is placed in a calm and quiet station."

Certainly that heart which is sweetened frequently with heavenly, delightful communion with God, is not very apt to be embittered with wrath, or soured with revenge against men. The peace of God doth *ερασειειν*, appease and end all strifes and differences, as an umpire : so much that word, Col. iii. 15. imports. The heavenly Spirit marvellously affects a sedate and quiet breast.

Now, never was there such a heavenly soul on earth, since man inhabited it, as Christ was : he had most sweet and wonderful communion with God : he had meat to eat, which others, yea, and those his greatest intimates, knew not of. The Son of man was in heaven upon earth, John iii. 13. Even in respect of that blessed heavenly communion he had with God, as well as in respect of his immense Deity : and that his heart was in heaven when he so patiently endured and digested the pain and shame of the cross is evident from Heb. xii. 2. "For the joy set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame." See where his eye and heart were, when he went as a lamb to the slaughter.

Sixthly, And lastly, As his meekness and patience sprang from the heavenliness and sublimity of his spirit ; so likewise, from the complete and absolute *obedience* of it to his Father's will and pleasure : he could most quietly submit to all the will of God, and never regret at any part of the work assigned him by his Father. For you must know, that Christ's death in him was an act of obedience ; he all along eyeing his Father's command and counsel in what he suffered, Phil. ii. 7, 8. John xviii. 11. Psal. xl. 6, 7, 8. Now look, as the eyeing and considering the hand of God in an affliction, presently becalms and quiets a gracious soul ; as you see in David, 2 Sam. xvi. 11. "Let him alone, it may be God that hath

* *Pars superior mundi est ordinatior, ac propinqua sideribus, nec in nubem cogitur, nec in tempestatem impellitur, nec versatur in turbinem; omni tumultu caret; inferiora fulminant. Eodem modo sublimis animus quietus semper est, et in statione tranquilla collocatur.* Seneca.

“bid him curse David;” So much more it quieted Jesus Christ, who was privy to the design and end of his Father, with whose will he all along complied; looking on Jews and Gentiles but as the instruments ignorantly fulfilling God’s pleasure, and serving that great design of his Father; this was his patience, and these the grounds of it.

Use 1. I might variously improve this point; but the direct and main use of it is, to press us to a Christ-like patience in all our sufferings and troubles. And seeing in nothing we are more generally defective, and that defects of Christians herein, are so prejudicial to religion, and uncomfortable to themselves; I resolve to wave all other uses, and spend the remaining time wholly upon this branch; even a *persuasive* to Christians unto all patience, in tribulations; to imitate their lamb-like Saviour. Unto this (Christians) you are expressly called, 1 Pet. ii. 21, 22. “Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps. Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.” Here is your pattern; a perfect pattern! a lovely and excellent pattern! Will you be persuaded to the imitation of Christ herein? Methinks I should persuade you to it: yea, every thing about you persuades to patience in your sufferings, as well as I: look which way you will, upward or downward, inward or outward, backward or forward, to the right-hand, or to the left, you shall find all things persuading and urging the doctrine of patience upon you.

First, Look upwards, when tribulations come upon you: look to that sovereign Lord, that commissionates and sends them upon you. You know troubles do not rise out of the dust, nor spring out of the ground, but are framed in heaven, Jer. xviii. 11. “Behold I frame evil, and devise a device against you.” Troubles and afflictions are of the Lord’s framing and devising, to reduce his wandering people to himself: much like that device of Absalom, in setting Joab’s field of corn on fire, to bring Joab to him, 2 Sam. xiv. 30. In the frame of your afflictions, you may observe much of divine wisdom in the *choice, measure,* and *season* of your troubles: sovereignty, in electing the instruments of your affliction; in making them as afflictive as he pleaseth; and in making them obedient both to his call, in coming and going, when he pleaseth. Now, could you in times of trouble look up to this sovereign hand, in which your souls, bodies, and all their comforts and mercies are; how quiet would your hearts be! Psal. xxxix. 9. “I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, because it is thy doing.” 1 Sam. iii. 18. “It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.” Oh,

when we have to do with men, and look no higher, how do our spirits swell and rise with revenge and impatience ! But if you once come to see, that man as a rod in your Father's hand, you will be quiet ; Psal. xlv. 10. " Be still, and know that I am God ;" q. d. consider with whom you have to do ; not with your fellow, but with your God, who can puff you to destruction with one blast of his mouth ; in whose hand you are, as the clay in the potter's hand. It is for want of looking up to God in our troubles, that we fret, murmur, and despond at the rate we do.

Secondly, Look downward, and see what is below you, as well as up to that which is above you. You are afflicted, and you cannot bear it. Oh ! no trouble like your trouble ! never man in such a case as you are ! Well, well, cast the eye of your mind downward, and see those who lie much lower than you. Can you see none on earth in a more miserable state than yourselves ? Are you at the very bottom, and not a man below you ? sure there are thousands in a sadder case than you on earth. What is your affliction ? Have you lost a relation ? others have lost all. Have you lost an estate, and are become poor ? Well, but there are some you read of, Job xxx. 4, 5, 6, 7. " Who cut up mallows by the bushes, " and juniper-roots for their meat. They are driven forth from " among men, they cried after them as after a thief. They dwell " in the cliffs of the vallies, in caves of the earth, and in the rocks. " Among the bushes they brayed, under the nettles they were " gathered together." What difference, as to manner of life, do you find between the persons here described, and the wild beasts, that herd together in a desolate place ? Are you persecuted and afflicted for Christ's sake ? What think you of their sufferings, Heb. xi. 36, 37. " Who had trial of cruel mockings ; yea, more " over of bonds and imprisonments : they were stoned, they were " sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword, they " wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, " afflicted, tormented." And are you better than they ? I know not what you are ; but I am sure, these were such " of whom the " world was not worthy," ver. 38.

Or are your afflictions more spiritual and inward ? Say not the Lord never dealt more bitterly with the soul of any, than he hath with yours. What think you of the case of David, Heman, Job, Asaph, whose doleful cries, by reason of the terrors of the Almighty, are able to melt the stoniest heart that reads their stories ? the Almighty was a terror to them : the arrows of God were *within* them ; they roared by reason of the disquietness of their hearts.

Or are your afflictions outward and inward together ; an afflicted soul in an afflicted body ? Are you fallen, like the ship in which Paul sailed, into a place where two seas meet ! Well, so it was with

Paul, Job, and many other of those worthies gone before you. Sure you may see many on earth who have been, and are in far lower and sadder states than yourselves.

Or if not on earth, doubtless, you will yield there are many in hell, who would be glad to change conditions with you, as bad as you think yours to be. And were not all these moulded out of the same lump with you? Surely, if you can see any creature below you, especially any reasonable being, you have no reason to return so ungratefully upon your God, and accuse your Maker of severity; or charge God foolishly. Look down, and you shall see grounds enough to be quiet.

Thirdly, Look inward, you discontented spirits, and see if you can find nothing there to quiet you. Cast your eye into your own hearts; consider either the *corruptions* or the *graces* that are there. Cannot you find weeds enough there, that need such winter-weather as this to rot them? Hath not that proud heart need enough of all this to humble it? That carnal heart need of such things as these to mortify it? That backsliding, wandering heart need of all this to reduce and recover it to its God? "If need be, ye are in heaviness," 1 Pet. i. 6. O Christian! didst thou not see need of this before thou camest into trouble? Or hath not God shewn thee the need of it since thou wast under the rod? It is much thou shouldest not see it; but be assured, if thou dost not, thy God doth: he knows thou wouldest be ruined for ever, if he should not take this course with thee.

Thy corruptions require all this to kill them. Thy lusts will take all this, it may be more than this, and all little enough. And as your corruptions call for it, so do your graces too. Wherefore think ye the Lord planted the principles of faith, humility, patience, &c. in your souls? What, were they put there for nothing? Did the Lord intend they should lie sleeping in their drowsy habits? Or were they not planted there in order to exercise? And how shall they be exercised without tribulations? Can you tell? Doth not "tribulation work patience, and patience experience, and experience hope?" Rom. v. 3, 4. Is not "the trial of your faith much more precious, than of gold which perishes," 1 Pet. i. 7. O look inward, and you will be quiet.

Fourthly, Look outward, and see who stands by and observes your carriage under trouble. Are there not many eyes upon you? yea, many envious observers round about you. It was David's request, Psal. v. 8. "Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness, because of mine enemies;" or, as the Hebrew word there might be rendered, because of mine observers or watchers. There is many an envious eye upon you. To the wicked there can scarcely be an higher gratification and pleasure, than to see your carriage under

trouble so like their own; for thereby they are confirmed in their prejudices against religion, and in their good opinion of themselves. These may talk and profess more than we; but when they are tried, and put to it, it appears plainly enough, their religion enables them to do no more than we do; they talk of heaven's glory, and their future expectances; but it is but talk, for it is apparent enough their hopes cannot balance a small affliction, with all the happiness they talk of. Oh, how do you dishonour Christ before his enemies, when you make them think all your religion lies in talking of it! Consider who looks on.

Fifthly, Look backward, and see if there be nothing behind you that may hush and quiet your impatient spirits; consult the multitude of experiences past and gone; both your own and others. Is this the first strait that ever you were in? If so, you have reason to be quiet, yet to bless God that hath spared you so long, when others have had their days filled up with sorrow. But if you have been in troubles formerly, and the Lord hath helped you; if you have past through the fire, and not been burnt; through the waters, and not drowned; if God hath stood by you, and hitherto helped you. O what cause have you to be quiet now, and patiently wait for the salvation of God! Did he help you then, and cannot he do so now? Did he give waters, and cannot he give bread also? Is he the God of the hills only, and not the God of the vallies also? O call to mind the days of old, the years of the right-hand of the Most High. "These things I call to mind, therefore I have hope," Lam. iii. 21. Have you kept no records of past experiences? How ungrateful then have you been to your God, and how injurious to yourselves, if you have not read them over in such a day as this? for to that end were they given you.

O when you shall consider what a God he hath been to you, at a pinch; how faithfully *Jehovah-jireh* hath stood by you; that this is not the first time your hearts and hopes have been low; as well as your condition, and yet God hath raised you again; surely you will find your present troubles made light, by a glance back upon your past experiences.

Sixthly, Look forward, to the end of your troubles; yea, look to a double end of them, the end of their *duration*, and the end of their *operation*. Look ye to the end of their duration, and that is just by you; they shall not be everlasting troubles, if you be such as fear the Lord. "The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Jesus Christ, after that ye have [suffered a while] make you perfect," 1 Pet. v. 10. "These light afflictions are but for a moment," 2 Cor. iv. 18. They are no more comparatively, with that vast eternity that is before you.

Alas! what are a few days and nights of sorrows, when they are past? Are they not swallowed up as a spoonful of water in the vast ocean? But more especially look to *the end of their operation*. What do all these afflictions tend to and effect? Do they not work out an exceeding weight of glory? Are you not by them made “partakers of his holiness?” Heb. xii. Is not this all the fruit to take away your sins? What, and be impatient at this; fret and repine, because God is, this way, perfecting your happiness? O ungrateful soul! Is this a due requital of that love that disdains not to stoop to so low an employment, as to scour and cleanse your souls, that they might be shining vessels of honour to all eternity?

O look forward to the end of your troubles: the end of their duration and operation.

Seventhly, Look to the right-hand, and see how you are shamed, convinced and silenced by other Christians; and it may be such too, as never made that profession you have done; and yet can not only patiently bear the afflicting hand of God, but are blessing, praising, and admiring God under their troubles; whilst you are sinning against, and dishonouring him under smaller ones. It may be you will find some poor Christians that know not where to have their next bread, and yet are speaking of the bounty of their God; while you are repining in the midst of plenty. Ah! if there be any ingenuity in you, let this shame you. If this will not, then,

Eighthly, Look to your left-hand, and there you will see a sad sight, and what one would think should quiet you. There you may see a company of wicked, graceless wretches, carrying themselves under their troubles, but too much like yourselves. What do they more, than fret and murmur, despond and sink; mix sin with their afflictions, when the rod of God is upon them?

It is time for thee to leave off, when thou seest how near thou art come to them, whom thou hopest thou shalt never be ranked and numbered with. Reader, such considerations as these, I am persuaded, would be of singular use to thy soul at such a time, but above all, thine eyeing the great pattern of patience, *Jesus Christ*; whose Lamb-like carriage, under a trial, with which thine is not to be named the same day, is here recommended to thee. O how should this transform thee into a lamb, for meekness also!