

expense of pain to those who were so dearly beloved. The whole life of our blessed Saviour was a carrying out of this principle. All that He did and suffered was for the sake of His Church. Did he leave the Throne of Majesty in Heaven—did he empty Himself of glory, and take upon Himself the deepest humiliation and abasement? "For our sakes He became poor." Did He here endure sorrows and pain, more deep, more intense than the human mind can conceive? "He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows." Did He take upon himself the burden of a world's sin, and sanctify Himself for the work of a Mediator? For our sakes he did it, and that *we* might be sanctified by the truth. A voice from heaven comforted Him, and He said, "This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. After having suffered he left the world, because "it was expedient for us that the Comforter might come to us." And He now sitteth at the right hand of the Majesty on high, that *we* may have "an Advocate with the Father." Upon the same law proceeded his dealings with us, his children. It is the law of love, which regards not so much the present happiness as the future blessedness of its object. Whatever befalls us then, whatever sorrows reach us, however dark may seem the ways of God with us, we know that it is for our sake, for our own good, that it is from Him who loves us with an infinite love, who for our sake spared not Himself, but freely gave Himself for us all.

Again. Our Lord was glad that he was not there—that is, to heal the sick. To have brought deliverance to that sorrowing family would have been a blessing—to withhold it was a greater blessing. By His presence, what comfort and joy would he have given to those hearts, now well nigh breaking with their agony of suspense and dread. They had sent to him, "Lord he whom thou lovest is sick." He knew how they longed for him; his heart was with them. He saw the trouble that was falling upon them. He saw the dread shadow of death as it grew deeper and blacker, as it settled down upon them, throwing its gloom upon all their pleasant things, until it shut out all light and joy from their homes, and yet he stayed away. Did they wonder at his absence, at his seeming indifference? Did they think that he had forsaken them? They were to learn that in this was a higher exercise of his love towards them than if he had responded to their prayer. In this, infinite love and wisdom were united to secure for them a blessing beyond what they could conceive. Doubtless many of us have known the bitterness of bereavement.