

behold us following after, will take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus. Even as to the Israelites the light of the uncreated glory yet lingered on the face of Moses after he had descended to them from communing with God upon the Mount, so shall we "shine as lights in the world holding forth the word of life," nor shine altogether in vain but to the inducing of some at least who observe us to give glory to God on the day of visitation, and, to take hold of us saying, "We will go with you, for God is with you of a truth." Not that in speaking of this open reward as respects others in this present time we wish to put out of view the reward which they who have fasted and mourned might well receive in the day of God; but that joining the two rewards together, and marking how the one leads on to the other, we wish to call to remembrance that the time is at hand when "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever."

But there is also to be public fasting. Public fasting, as has already been observed, is, where not national, the fasting of a particular church or community, or of a particular congregation. Now it is to be remarked that several of the rules given by our Lord for private fasting are equally to be observed in public fasting. There is to be no ostentation in this kind any more than in the other; there is to be no *shew* of fasting but the *reality* of it; no appearance to men to fast, but the appearance to our Father to fast—that is, the fasting in deed and in truth, the afflicting our souls not with feigned but with unfeigned grief. In a public fast, however, such as our church now has it in prospect to keep, while there should be no ostentation, neither

should there be, as indeed there cannot properly be, any concealment of it. So far from its being proper to aim at concealment in this case, it is altogether right that there should be a decent open profession that we are so engaged. The fast is by mutual agreement:—it is ordained by an authority, which a christian people should respect, that of their lawfully constituted Supreme Court; it is known some time before hand when it is to take place; the body come together openly to celebrate it; it is known to the world around us that we are so engaged; and why, then, in such a case aim at concealment which, as it could not be attained, so neither would it be right or desirable, but the reverse, as obstructing some of the most important ends for which a public fast is instituted.

It is of much importance to mark distinctly the difference in this respect between a private and a public fast, as from neglect of this, serious error has been sometimes fallen into in regard to the directions of our Lord concerning fasting already referred to. We have heard of persons defending their disregard of a public fast appointed within their community—defending the doing of things altogether incompatible with the exercises appropriate to such a solemnity—on the ground that no less an authority than that of our blessed Saviour had enjoined them to avoid all appearance of such austerity, and even to engage in their ordinary business and pursue their ordinary pleasures that the appearance of it might be the more surely and effectually avoided. Such a line of defence in regard to the matter could only have arisen from confounding private and public fasting, and making what applies exclusively to the one, apply to the other also. In individual and private fasting all publicity is carefully