

counsels of God. We cannot understand this; but so it was. There are many things in God's purposes and dealings which we cannot understand yet.

It was probably still morning when our Lord came down from the mountain, and entered into a house with His disciples. No sooner was He there than He was again surrounded by the multitude, "so that they could not so much as eat bread." And this, after a night spent on the mountain!

"His friends"—doubtless "His brethren and His mother," mentioned presently—hearing of this, went to the house, "to lay hold on Him," to rescue Him from the crowd, and bring Him to rest and food. They were anxious about Him. He would kill Himself by such a life. "He is beside Himself!" they said.

None understood Him then; not His disciples; not His brethren; not even His mother fully, though she pondered in her heart what He said and did. Yet His own words explained His conduct. "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." He was even then about His Father's business; He was seeking the lost. He did not come for ease or rest. "I have meat [or food] to eat, which ye know not of," He said. "My meat [or food] is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work."

F. B.

THE MARTYRS.

THOSE worthies, of whom this world was not worthy, and the martyrs in all ages, did commonly present better, higher, and greater things to their own souls in the promises, than any of their adversaries were able to propose, to draw them off from Christ, their profession or principles, and by this means they did very courageously and honourably maintain their ground in the face of all the gay and golden temptations that they met withal. "Your cruelty is our glory," said they; "and the we are harder put to it, the greater shall be our reward in heaven."

Basil will tell you that the most cruel martyrdom is but a crafty trick to escape death—to pass from life to life, as he speaks.

It can be but a day's journey between the cross and Paradise. Though the cross be bitter, yet it is but short. "A little storm," as one said of Julian's persecution, "and an eternal calm follows." Adrianus, seeing the martyrs suffer cheerfully such grievous and dreadful things, asked why they would endure such misery, when they might, by retracting, free themselves; upon which one of them alleged that text, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." The naming of the text, and seeing them suffer such hard things cheerfully, did, by a blessing from on high, so really and effectually convert him, that afterwards he became a martyr too.

When we see poor, weak, feeble Christians defying their torments, conquering in the midst of sufferings, singing in prison as Paul and Silas did, kissing the stake as Henry Voes did, clapping their hands when they were half consumed with ire as Hawkes did, blessing God that ever they were born to see that day, as John Noyes did, calling their execution day their wedding-day as Bishop Ridley did, we cannot but conclude that they had an eye to the recompense of reward, and that they saw such great, and sweet, and glorious things in the promises, that did so refresh, delight, and ravish their hearts, and transport their souls, that all their heavy afflictions seemed light, and their long afflictions short, and their most bitter afflictions sweet and easy to them.

Thomas Brooks.

NOBODY'S ENEMY BUT HIS OWN.



WELL, well, I dare say you are right. I know that I have not been doing exactly as I ought, and I have had to pay for it. Still, nobody need to be troubled about that, for nobody is any worse for it but myself."

The speaker was William Shepherd, a young man

about four-and-twenty, an assistant in a large house of business.

It was Monday morning. The previous day had been spent in a railway trip to the seaside; and his pale, haggard appearance bore witness to the fact that the day had not been concluded in the soberest way. These habits had been for some time gaining ground upon him, and there seemed only too much probability that he would settle down into a confirmed drunkard.

It so happened that in the same establishment there was another young man of the name of Wilson, a little older than Shepherd, to whom, in spite of their great difference of tastes and pursuits, Shepherd was accustomed to look up with much respect. Wilson had frequently remonstrated; and his reproofs, though often taken with a little impatience, were still on the whole received kindly. He had just used the opportunity afforded by Shepherd's unexpectedly remaining in the house the following evening, to expostulate with him. The above was Shepherd's reply.

"But do you really mean to, say," asked Wilson, "that nobody is the worse for what you do but yourself? You did not go by yourself, did you?"

"Of course not. Nobody ever thinks of going pleasure trips alone. There was a tolerably large party of us."

"Perhaps it did not strike you," rejoined Wilson, "that you were doing harm to every one of them. You set them an example of Sabbath-breaking. May