

weighty cause of mourning, that we can trace in our conduct so little agreement with the Divine will, and in our souls so little resemblance to the Divine image, and that we are consequently so far from His favour. We will consider it cause of mourning that we have returned the providential care, the tender mercies, the continual love of our Almighty Parent by frequent acts of open disobedience, by coldness of affections, and by so long a course of ungrateful forgetfulness. We will mourn, because when He had done so much to bless us, we have done so much to provoke and displease Him. In short, my hearers, if we are imbued with the true spirit of Christ, our sins and thousand imperfections will assuredly make us mourners before God. And then, and not till then, do we become entitled to the comforts which God has in store for his people—*Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.*

And how shall they be comforted? By the assurance in God's word of divine forgiveness through the merits of the Saviour's blood. They will be comforted by the continual and cheering influence of the Holy Ghost the Comforter, communicating an animating sense of restoration to the Divine favour. They will be comforted by the sure and certain hope of eternal blessedness in the future world, after the days of their mourning here have ended. And they will be comforted at last by the full realizing of that hope, and the complete enjoyment of that blessedness in the land of immortality. This is the sort of comfort, my hearers, that the Gospel holds out to the spiritual mourner, but to no other,—not to the gay, haughty, or self-righteous whose spirits are never bowed down by any thing but the sorrows of scenes that are temporal.—Let us enquire, my hearers, since only those that mourn for their iniquity are blessed with a share in the privileges of the Gospel of Peace—whether sin, our own individual sinfulness, has ever been, and is now with us, the subject of penitential sorrow? Whether our worldly laughter has ever been turned to spiritual heaviness, and our thoughtless joy to suitable mourning, by the contemplation of our manifold iniquities, our great unworthiness, and our deplorable deficiency before God, in every thing which he requires of his faithful creatures. If such has been the case—if when your past lives come in review before you, you are humbled and sorrowful under a sense of their manifold deficiencies;—if in your private retirements there is sincere sorrow awakened in your bosom that you are such unprofitable creatures of so bountiful a God;—if repentance be an exercise familiar to your souls—happy, brethren, are ye,—*Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.* God looks down with favourable eyes upon hearts like these; He puts their tears into His bottle; He values and preserves them all; He notes these sorrowful feelings in His book against the Day of Judgment. To this man does He look, even to him that is of an humble and contrite spirit—His sacrifice is a broken and contrite spirit, which He will never despise.

Take comfort therefore, my brethren, from these merciful assurances of the "God of all comfort." If you are assaulted by any of the varied calamities of life. If called to part, as some of you have lately been, with beloved children, remember that if you seek the Lord with all your hearts, He will give you strength, and patience, and consolation. Or if you are bowed down under a sense of your sinfulness;—if your sins stare you in the face as more in number than the hair of your heads,—and if you feel their remembrance grievous, and their burden intolerable—still take comfort; for Chr^t says such shall be comforted—*Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.*—Far happier is the state of such than that of those who float down the stream of life, burdened with no cares for the past, the present, or the future.—strangers it may be, both to temporal and spiritual trouble. We read of no blessedness pronounced on them. How can they indeed be blessed?—Rushing on to eternity—careless of its vast and concerns—with souls made for happiness or misery—yet careless about securing the one or avoiding the other. The good Lord deliver you, my brethren, from such delusion, and implant within you all, that sorrow for sin, and that concern for your souls, which will entitle you to lay hold of the promises of everlasting consolation.

WESLEY'S REASONS FOR NOT SEPARATING FROM THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

Because it would be a contradiction to the solemn and repeated declarations which we have made in all manner of ways, in preaching, in print and in private conversation.

Because on this, as well as many other accounts, it would give huge occasion of offence to those who seek and desire occasion; to all the enemies of God and truth.

Because it would exceedingly prejudice against us many who fear, yea, who love God; and thereby hinder their receiving so much, perhaps any further benefit from our preaching.

Because it would hinder multitudes of those who neither love nor fear God, from hearing us at all.

Because it would be throwing balls of wild fire among them that are now quiet in the land. We are now sweetly united together in love. We mostly think and speak the same things. But this would occasion inconceivable strife and contention between those who left and those who remained in the Church, as well as between those who left us, and those that remained with us; nay, and between those very persons who remained, as they were variously inclined one way or the other.

Because, to form the plan of a new Church, would require infinite time and care, (which might be far more profitably bestowed) with much more wisdom, and greater depth and extensiveness of thought than any of us are masters of.

Because, from some having barely entertained a distant thought of this, evil fruits have already followed; such a prejudice against the clergy in general, and aptness to believe ill of them; contempt not without a degree of bitterness, of clergymen, as such; and a sharpness of language towards the whole order utterly unbecoming either gentlemen or Christians.

Because we have melancholy instances of this, even before our eyes. Many have, in our memory, left the Church, and formed themselves into distinct bodies. And certainly some of them from a real persuasion, that they should do God more service. But have any separated themselves and prospered? have they been either more holy, or more useful than they were before?

Because by such a separation we should not only throw away the peculiar glorifying which God has given us, "That we do and will suffer all things for our brethren's sake, though the more we love them, the less we be loved;" but should act in direct contradiction to that very end, for which we believe God hath raised us up. The chief design of his providence in sending us out, is undoubtedly to quicken our brethren. And the first message of all our preachers is, to the lost sheep of the Church of England. Now would it not be a flat contradiction to this design, to separate from the Church? These things being considered, we cannot apprehend (whether it be lawful in itself or no) that it is lawful to us; were it only on this ground, that it is by no means expedient.

It has indeed been objected, that till we do separate, we cannot be a compact, united body.

It is true, we cannot till then be a compact united body, if you mean by that expression, a body distinct from all others; and we have no desire to be so.

We look upon ourselves, not as the authors or ring-leaders of a particular sect or party; it is the farthest thing from our thoughts; but as messengers of God to those who are Christians in name, but heathens in heart and life; to call them back to that from which they are fallen, to real, genuine Christianity. We are therefore debtors to all of them, of whatever opinion and denomination; and are consequently to do all that in us lies, to please all for their good to edification.

We look upon the *Methodists*, so called, in general, not as any particular party: (this would exceedingly obstruct the grand design for which we conceive God has raised them up)—but as living witnesses in, and to every party, of that Christianity which we preach; which is hereby demonstrated to be a real thing, and visibly held out to all the world.

We look upon the clergy, not only as a part of our brethren, but as that part whom God, by his adorable providence, has called to be watchmen over the rest, for whom therefore they are to give a strict account. If these men neglect their important charge; if they

do not watch over them with all their power, they will be of all men most miserable, and so are entitled to our deepest compassion. So that to feel, and much more to express either contempt or bitterness towards them betrays an utter ignorance of ourselves and of the spirit which we especially should be of.

Might it not be at least a prudential rule, for every Methodist preacher, not to frequent any dissenting meeting? Though we blame none who have always been accustomed to it. But if we do this, certainly our people will. Now this is actually separating from the Church. If, therefore, it is, at least, not expedient to separate, neither is this expedient. Indeed, we may attend our assemblies and the Church too, because they are at different hours. But we cannot attend both the meeting and the Church, because they are at the same hours. If it be said "But at the Church, we are fed with chaff; whereas, at the meeting we have wholesome food;" We answer; 1st. The prayers of the Church are not chaff; they are substantial food for any who are alive to God. 2d. The Lord's supper is not chaff, but pure and wholesome for all who receive it with upright hearts. 3d. In almost all the sermons we hear there, we hear many great and important truths. And whoever has a spiritual discernment may easily separate the chaff from the wheat therein. 4th. How little is the case mended at the meeting? Either the teachers are new-light-men, denying the Lord that bought them, and overturning his Gospel from the very foundation; or they are predestinarians, and so preach predestination and final perseverance more or less. Now, whatever this may be to them that were educated therein, yet to those of our brethren who have lately embraced it, repeated experience shows it is not wholesome food; rather to them it has the effect of deadly poison. In a short time it destroys all their zeal for God. They grow fond of opinions and strife of words. They despise self denial and the daily cross: and to complete all, wholly separate from their brethren.

Nor is it expedient for any Methodist preacher to imitate the dissenters in their manner of praying: neither in his *tone*; all particular tones, both in preaching and praying, should be avoided with the utmost care. Nor in his *language*; all his words should be plain and simple, such as the lowest of his hearers both use and understand. Nor in the length of his prayer, which should not usually exceed four or five minutes, either before or after sermon.

If we continue in the Church, not by chance or for want of thought, but upon solid and well weighed reasons, then we should never speak contemptuously of the Church, or any thing pertaining to it. In some sense, it is the mother of us all, who have been brought up therein.

In order to cut off all jealousy and suspicion from our friends, and hope from our enemies, of our having any design to separate from the Church, it would be well for every Methodist preacher, who has no scruple concerning it, to attend the service of the Church as often as conveniently he can. And the more we attend it, the more we love it, as constant experience shows. On the contrary the longer we abstain from it the less desire we have to attend it at all.—*Chr. Wit.*

DEVOTION IN CHILDHOOD.

Christian parents hear their children say their prayers, but do not always teach them to pray. Children over six years of age may be taught the important duty of sacred prayer. As first impressions never fade away, how interested should parents be to form a early habit of devotion in their offspring. This habit will not become a mere form. No one will long persevere in private devotions from habit only. In Scotland it is not unfrequent for parents to ask their children, regularly, "if they have been by themselves," meaning to make an extemporaneous prayer. When youth learn, by experience, the nature of prayer, they will take a more lively interest in family and church devotions.

Carefully avoid those vices which most resemble virtue, they are the most dangerous of all vices.

He that riseth late in the morning must be in a hurry all the day, and scarce overtake his business at night.