

his way to Calvary, and the agonies which he endured there, were not only intense, but had a peculiar bitterness in them as involving a curse. He was made a curse for us. Recollecting therefore the agonizing cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Mary's answer to the question Why weepst thou? might not inappropriately have been, I weep at the remembrance of what was endured by him in whom was fulfilled the mysterious announcement, "Awake, O sword, against the man that is my fellow" I weep at the remembrance of the sufferings of him in whose agonies I now see a meaning which I never before apprehended in the words of the prophet, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.

Now, we do not say that no thoughts of this kind were giving poignancy to the sorrows of Mary Magdalene; and, particularly, we do not say that her mind was at this time unaffected by the recollection of the sufferings which she had so lately witnessed; but it is evident that the prevailing feeling of the moment was that of distress at not finding the body of Jesus in the grave. When the angels proposed to her the question "Woman, why weepst thou?" her answer was, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." And again, when Jesus himself proposed the same question, "she, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." Yet how bitter and hopeless indeed would the tears of Mary have eventually been had the body still remained where she expected to find it! Then, indeed, might the chief priests and pharisees have triumphed over him whom they called a deceiver, and of whom they at least recollected, altho' Mary had forgotten, that he had said, while he was yet alive. After three days I will rise again. Then, indeed, must the hopes of his followers have perished for ever; for, if Christ had not risen, faith would be vain, believers would be still in their sins. But Christ had risen. He was even then no indifferent spectator of Mary's distress. He knew the sincerity of the affection which kept her lingering there; and he asks her why she weeps, because he is about to give her convinc-

ing evidence that she has rather cause for joy. He discovers to her, not the dead body which she intended to embalm, but the risen, the living, the life-giving Saviour. He discovers to her himself, as having arisen the first fruits of them that slept.

Now, however, that Mary's sorrow has been turned into joy, she must not confine the joy to her own heart—she must go and tell his brethren that Jesus ascends unto the Father. Other mourners need to be comforted, and she is to comfort them by the comfort wherewith she herself has been comforted of God. And this is a duty which Christ lays upon all his disciples. His word, indeed, marks a distinction as to the way in which this duty is to be discharged by those who are officially appointed to preach the gospel, and by private Christians; but it declares that all ought to feel a concern in this, and that, whether it be in actually preaching the gospel themselves, or in providing the means that the gospel may be preached by others, and in praying for a blessing on these means, they are to exert themselves in endeavouring to spread the joyful tidings that Christ is risen.

Let those therefore who profess to rejoice in knowing that Christ is risen, justify this profession by their concern to make known the blessed truth to others. The true children of God cannot but be concerned about those who are still dead in trespasses and sins, they sigh for the abominations which are committed against a holy God, they are filled with a godly sorrow for those sins for which they themselves have obtained forgiveness through the blood of the cross, and, while their affection leads them to sympathize with the Saviour in his sufferings, their desire is that he may see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied. Let not those therefore who profess to be such, grudge the appropriation of a part of their worldly substance, let them not grudge any effort or any sacrifice to which in the providence of God they may be called, in order to bring near to perishing sinners, in a preached gospel, the Saviour whom they need, in order to uphold those ordinances in the enjoyment of which they themselves and others may experience more abundantly the power of that grace which is dispensed by him who, having ascended up on high leading captivity captive, hath obtained gifts for men even for the rebellious, that God the Lord might dwell among them.