

It was not their desire of applause, for never was a theme more spoken against and opposed than theirs, and never were characters more reviled. Applause! Why they warned their hearers against glorying in men, and disclaimed the wisdom of words, lest the Gospel of Christ should be made of none effect. The secret of their patient and even joyful endurance was their faith, which carried them as on eagle's wings, and set them in heavenly places with Christ Jesus.

Let us now specify a few ordinary cases of trial, and we shall see equal efficacy in this antidote. Consider the condition of the Christian when troubled by fears respecting his redemption; and where is the Christian who has never been agitated by these fears? If there be only the merest probability that we shall at last be rejected by God, is it not enough to awaken anxiety and care even to agony? and oh! when so many hostile influences surround us that the righteous are scarcely saved, how is it possible not to shudder at the awful contingency! What can allay these alarms? Just faith in God, and faith also in Christ, which enables the Christian to know and understand that God, who sent his Son on an embassy of love to him when caring for none of these things, will much more deliver him from wrath now, when all his anxieties are awakened in reference to eternity, his soul, and his Saviour's cause. Conscious of his own earnestness, he looks, by faith, for proofs of the earnestness of God, and he finds on every hand that God willeth that none should perish. He opens his Bible and finds that whosoever will may take of the water of life freely; that no poor awakened sinner was ever more in earnest to seize proffered pardon than He is to grant it. His own testimony is—"I said not unto the seed of Jacob, seek ye my face in vain. The Lord speak righteousness; I declare things that are right."

Again, for the same purpose observe the affliction which arises from the losses peculiar to this changing world—shattered fortunes, broken friendships, and unsuspected enmity—and the true remedy for them all is faith in God, and faith also in Jesus. Riches take themselves wings, and flee away. When this happens, observation and experience teach that the shock is great, so that broken fortunes are generally synonymous with broken hearts. Nature rebels at the deplorable accident, and frets at the sad transition, but faith looks up to that treasure which neither moth nor rust can corrupt, and which thieves can never steal, and finds itself invigorated and improved by the change. The Christian whose lot it is to look back on departed pomp and grandeur, may have much cause to say with David: "It is good for me to have been afflicted." His future may be far more bright and cheering than the past. If he may not hope for the establishment of his true position, he may hope for a kingdom

which shall never be moved. Broken friendships are not of uncommon occurrence. The warm generous heart feels most acutely the dissolution of the tie that bound it to another which it judged equally warm and generous, but in which, as events proved, it misplaced its confidence. Its complaint then, coincides with that of the Psalmist: "It was not an enemy that reproached me, for then I could bear it; neither was it one that hated me, then I could have hid myself from him." Humanity is often afflicted with this species of trouble; but Christianity prescribes a remedy. If friends prove false, look to that friend who sticketh closer than a brother. If seeming friends betray, behold that innumerable company of angels and spirits of the just in glory, where there is perpetual friendship cemented by the harmony of one common aim, principle, and pursuit. Where strife and competition have been thrown aside for ever; where ambition, with its jealousies, and controversy, with its thorns, have been extinguished by fullness of joy and love and glory.

Lastly. The approaching death of Jesus being the proximate cause of the sorrow of the disciples, was the occasion also of the counsel contained in our text; and this prescription, consequently, is peculiarly applicable to those who mourn the death of relatives. While they sorrow, they need not despair. The death of Christ has deprived death of its sting. The sepulchre of Jesus has consecrated and sanctified all Christian graves throughout the world, and soon the dead in Christ shall rise to glory. All the better for their mouldering in the dust, because the body of sin and death has been destroyed. The body of weakness and corruption has been glorified and spiritualized. Let not your hearts be troubled. "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go that I may awake him out of sleep." Hear, then, his gracious promise, and believe that the dark and cold grave is but a bed of sleep, and that He who is the resurrection and the life, shall ere long awake all its tenantry. Let your faith penetrate the future, and behold your friend in all the beauty of holiness, enrobed in purity, and crowned in bliss.

Contrast with this divine antidote the prescriptions of the world in its treatment of the same troubles. If peradventure one is seen disturbed by fears for his soul's salvation, abandoning his former associates and habits, he is marked as a melancholy man, and advised to laugh away his fears. He is flattered that his character is as unexceptionable as that of others; that flaws and imperfections may be detected in the best, and that there is really no ground for his dismal apprehensions; that there is time enough to think of these things which comport very well with sick beds, and hospitals, and funerals, but are surely not adapted for youth and its innocent enjoyments, or for manhood's manly