

Time is on the wing. Precious days of grace are now numbered among the things which have been. "O that thou hadst known in this thy day the things which belonged unto thy peace ; but now they are hid from thine eyes."

It is possible that some may be my hearers this day, who, for many years, sat under my ministry with professed satisfaction, but who, when conscience and truth called on me to make a sacrifice, have coolly and deliberately deserted me. Surely they cannot plead that I had imbibed erroneous doctrine, or that I had ceased to preach to them the whole counsel of God. Is there not an awful responsibility attached to those who willingly surrender the spiritual privileges of the Church, and the honours of her king, for the sake of worldly emoluments and a secularised Establishment ? who, moreover, forsake the pastor of their affections that they may place themselves under the ministry of those whose trustworthiness, forsooth, as guides to the kingdom of Heaven, has been tested by the base dereliction of principles, which they so lately counted it their honour and their glory to uphold ?

But the solemn transactions of this day cast their shadows before—they suggest matter of *devout anticipation*. If any one period of my ministry has been to my own mind happier than another, it has been the period from the eventful era of the disruption of the Church till the present hour. Difficulties which formerly stood in my way have been removed. Access to the people of my pastoral charge has become much more easy ; and the tie of relationship, while it had lost almost everything of its geographical character, had realised more perfectly its spiritual bearings. On these accounts, assuredly, the breaking up of this tie must be to me, as to you, doubly painful, while the remembrance of many hallowed associations of kindred and of friends, must add to the keenness of the separation. But the Church of our fathers has now become, more than ever, a confessing and witnessing Church. To bear witness to the same truths in another land, is the duty to which your pastor is now called, and the experience of the past may not be lost if it