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Christ Does All for the Best

“Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more....” John 16:7–10

Our Lord Jesus Christ is now about to leave the world and go from His disciples and servants. He endeavors before His departure to strengthen and establish their hearts both against those sufferings they were likely to meet with, and also against that sorrow that now their hearts were filled with upon the hearing of His departing and going away from them.

As for their sufferings, you have that spoken to in the first four verses wherein He gives them a reason why He speaks to them concerning their sufferings. “These things have I spoken unto you that you might not be offended. I tell you beforehand of your sufferings that you may not be offended.” What’s that? Namely that you may not so stumble when you meet with more sufferings than you expected, and so be ready to turn your backs upon the gospel, upon your profession. “These things have I spoken unto you.” He had been speaking in the last verse of the former chapter of their meeting with tribulation in the world. And, said Christ, “These things have I spoken unto you beforehand that when they come you might not stumble and go back.”

You see, brethren, how tender Jesus Christ is of His disci-

ples and servants? He would not have them to be offended, and therefore He tells them beforehand of their sufferings; and that is the way to prevent offenses and stumbling, and falling back from our profession by our persecutions and sufferings, to understand and know beforehand what we are likely to meet with. And therefore, said Christ, “I tell you of these things before so that when they come to pass you may not be offended.” And then He tells them more particularly what sufferings they are likely to meet with. “You are likely to meet with the highest and greatest kind of sufferings, sufferings of the highest nature both from the ecclesiastic and civil state, the highest kind of sufferings they possibly can inflict upon you, for you shall be brought into their ecclesiastic courts; they shall excommunicate and cast you out of their synagogues, and not only so but you shall have the censure of their civil courts. You shall have the sentence of death passed upon you; they shall put you to death, and think they do God good service in so doing. These things you must look for.”

And, by the way, take notice that Christ and His servants are exposed to the greatest wrath, malice, indignation, and hatred that this world can exercise on them. The highest kinds of evil and punishment that this world can inflict upon them are all little enough; and then He gives the reason why they shall thus inflict such punishments on them and put them to such sufferings. Verse 3: “These things will they do because they have not known the Father nor Me.” It is from their ignorance of God and Christ. And it is truly so with all persecutors. What they do against the saints and people of God is from their ignorance of Christ; for did they know God and Christ they would not so persecute the saints and servants of Christ. But these things they will do because they have not known the Father or Me.”

But then the disciples might ask Christ why He did not speak of these things before, and tell them what sufferings they