

As to this Lent compared with
last there are many external
causes the ill affects of which
thou feel no less than you do.

First the frequent & long ~~res~~
suspension of Daily Service, the
distractum of secular and
exciting subjects, the read-
ing of an ill chosen book,
and other reasons of which
I have it in my power to say
that, the Flock is not responsi-
ble but the Pastor.

The fact is probably as you
say: and is a matter worthy
of sad thoughts, & confession
in secret.

Under the difficult circumstances of the case I think you did right yesterday. At all events you did it for the best; & that is right to you: and God will not suffer you to lack any thing for so doing even if you were to judge wrong.

As to the general question. You complain of a want of "sensible" compunction, humility & the love of God."

Remember that I said there are the 3 ends.

They are written beginnings or means, but ends - and you must expect a long way - perhaps "forty years long in the wilderness" - before you attain

to such a sense of these things as would stay your complaint at the want of them.

All that you can do is:

1. To aim at them.
2. To desire & pray for them.
3. To feel any measure of sorrow & shame at not possessing them. To be sorry & ashamed, that your sorrow & shame are not equal.
4. To wait till God gives them in due season.

The words "Repentance without love" may be overstrained. There is love in the lowest motion of the heart towards God: even in the Prodigal's still saying "my Father": there is real love

in every desire for repentance which
we feel ourselves not to possess: in
every feeling of unhappiness, & self-
reproach such as arises in com-
paring this Lent with last.

Perhaps what God is teaching you
this Lent is the reality & extent of
your defects, such as distraction
& heartlessness in prayer &c.

So that this Lent may turn out
fuller of real humiliation after all
than the last.

Again an increased sense of
faultiness certainly does not prove
inactivity of conscience.

As to indevotion in prayer, a
distinction must be drawn between
carelessness, or distraction, & want
of sensible earnestness, or enjoyment

of God's presence. These last are
wholly gifts of God. and the
most deoul- are suffered often
to go long in a dry, & dim
state. as in Isaick. 4. 10.

You may take two great
consolations.

1. That no distractions in prayer are
imputed ~~to~~^{us} as faults, but
then they are voluntary, or
when after perceiving them we
continue in them willingly.
2. That perseverance in prayer in
spite of weariness, dryness, &
discouragement is if I may
so say, more acceptable, than
prayer with great sensible sweetness.

because they have in them
none of faith, patience, self-cher-
ishment & humiliation.

Let me know exactly ^{if} where
I have failed to understand
you.

Then God direct your heart into
the love of God, & into the patient
waiting for Christ."

Frost of St. Matthias.
1845.