

## SERMON XI.

OR,

HOW TO MOURN FOR THE AFFLICTIONS OF SAINTS.

*'Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.'*—MAT. v. 4.

BUT now, my brethren, the thing I shall speak a little to is this, to shew unto you how we should mourn for the afflictions of the saints, that so you might mourn kindly for their afflictions:

For some will say, We are affected; and God forbid but that we should be grieved when we hear that the church is so afflicted. It doth grieve our hearts when we hear of the plundering of so many good people, and how they are put out of their houses and homes. But now,

First, There may be a natural mourning for the afflictions of others, which is not this blessed mourning; and therefore if you would know the difference between the natural and spiritual mourning for the afflictions of the church, take it briefly in these three or four particulars, which I shall but name:—

The first is, Those that mourn for the afflictions of the church in a spiritual way, they mourn upon spiritual grounds; and a natural man is upon natural grounds. You mourn to hear such woeful bloodshed, desolations of countries. As you are men you cannot but be affected; but now are you most affected upon spiritual grounds, because the saints do suffer, because the liberties of the ordinances are taken from them, because the adversaries of God's people do most prevail, because religion is trampled under-foot? Do you mourn therefore? It is true these are mourning times. Most people they mourn because of fear of outward danger, or for their great taxes, and they have not things as they were wont to have; but a spiritual mourning is upon spiritual grounds.

And then, secondly, Spiritual mourning will put much upon prayer. That we spake to in the general, when we shewed how those that are in a mournful condition themselves they should pray much; so here, those that do mourn for the churches, if they mourn in a spiritual way, they will pray much for the churches. I appeal to your consciences in this thing. You hear many times sad news concerning the sufferings of your brethren abroad: it may be you will say, the Lord have mercy upon them, or so; but

when did you get alone between God and your souls, and pour forth your souls before God in secret, on the behalf of the churches of God—or it may be you have done so sometimes; but is this in your hearts to do so in an ordinary way? If your children be afflicted, perhaps you will go to prayer then, and wring your hands; but you have heard of the afflictions of the churches, and have your hearts been so affected as to go and break your spirits before the Lord in prayer? Now that is a spiritual mourning. For to have a sadness upon your spirits, upon the hearing of ill news, that may be but in a natural way; but for your hearts to break before God in prayer for the church, that is in a spiritual way. Now the churches suffer more than they have done; and are your prayers enlarged more than formerly for them? This is spiritual, and blessed are they that so mourn, as that they are put upon prayer, and enlarged in prayer by their mourning.

And thirdly, If your hearts be spiritual in your mourning, why then, look what God doth spare you in. In that you do not spend your strength in suffering as others do, it will cause you to be so much the more earnest and willing to spend your strength in service and doing for God. If your hearts were affected as they ought to be for the churches, you would consider thus: How do they suffer in their estates, and in their bodies and liberties! They are forced to spend their strength and estates in a way of suffering. Why now, Lord, thou dost not call me to spend my strength and estate in that way of suffering as thou callest my brethren to; why, Lord, thou shalt have it spent for thee in a way of doing, in a way of service. Oh it is good for us to have our strength and estates to be spent for God in the exercise of our graces, rather than to be spent for him in the suffering for our sin; and it were a very good meditation when you hear of any that were by any accident whatsoever: They suffer so much for God in a passive way; Oh then let me be willing to spend in an active way for God; and this will be a good argument that your hearts are spiritual.

Fourthly, Yea, further, when the thankfulness that you have for your being delivered from those heavy afflictions that are upon others shall humble your hearts as much as if you were under the same afflictions that others are under, this were a good sign of a spiritual frame. You hear of the afflictions of other men; why, now when you can be so sensible of those afflictions, so as to make you to be as much humbled in a way of thankfulness as you should be if you were under the same afflictions, now your hearts are in a spiritual way sensible of their condition. And so much for that of the spiritualness of our hearts in being sensible of the afflictions of others.

But now, in the second place, What duties doth the consideration of the afflictions of others call for from us? When we hear that others are in affliction, and we are delivered, I say, what duties doth this call for at our hands? Now to that I answer, it calls for these three:—

First, An abatement of our outward comforts in this world. We should be willing, when we hear how the churches suffer, to abate of a great part of our outward comforts that we had before for the flesh, to be willing to be cut short ourselves, so far as we may do it in a way of service for God. Certainly it is not lawful for men in such times as these are, when there is such a darkness upon the face of the land, and upon so many thousands of their brethren, it is not lawful for to give that full liberty to the satisfying of the flesh as in other times you may do. I might shew it out of divers scriptures, but that I hasten to that remains.

But secondly, The second duty is to be ready to help them in their afflictions, to let out ourselves for their comfort. Seeing that Christ hath said, 'Those that mourn shall be comforted,' every one of us should endeavour to make good what Christ hath said—that is, to comfort them by our estates, to comfort them by all the means that possibly we can; and never to think it much that you are frequently sent unto to pity them that are in an afflicted condition, though you have often contributions, yet to do it freely and cheerfully. You cannot perform the duties that God requires of you in your being sensible of their mournful condition, except you will put to your hand to comfort them. You cannot pray to God to comfort them, but you take God's name in vain, except you likewise are willing to do what you are able.

And then the third duty is this, We should put ourselves into the same condition that they are in, in our meditations, and consider what we would do if God should put us really into the same condition that they are put into. When you hear of those that have lost their estates, and are banished and driven up and down to seek bread, that were wont to

live comfortably, you should put yourselves into such a condition—Lord, what would become of me if I were so? Suppose I were under the enemy's mercy as they are, what would become of me! in what a sad condition should I be in! But you will say, Why should we so trouble ourselves, seeing God delivers us, to put ourselves into the same condition in our meditation as our brethren are in?

To that I answer, That God requires this. You cannot be so thoroughly sensible of their estates as you should, nor make that use of that afflicted condition that they are in, except you do put yourselves sometimes into their conditions, and think with yourselves, What should I do if I were in their estate? And for that I will give you this scripture, Heb. xiii. 3, 'Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them that suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.' 'Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them.' Here the apostle writes to those that were at liberty, and yet he requires of them to 'Remember those that were in bonds, as if they were bound with them.' So that those that are in prison now by the enemy, why, consider as if you were in prison with them, those that have lost all, as if you had lost all with them; so that you must remember them. Otherwise it is a very slight kind of affection that you find your hearts touched withal, if so be that you can but only say, Oh how cruelly are they used! The Lord pity them, and have mercy upon them! Ay, but lay this to heart, What if I were so? what if it were really my condition?

But you will say, Suppose we should put that to ourselves, what good use would there come of this?

To that I answer, Many ways; if you would but put yourselves into their condition, and consider What if I were so, then consider from hence what duties you would be further put upon in this.

As, first, If I were in their condition, certainly I could not but then be sensible of the vanity of the creature; what a vain thing it is to rest upon any outward comforts in this world. There was a time, it may be, that not long ago they enjoyed as much of the outward comforts of this world as I do; but in one night they are stripped of all, and have nothing in their houses, and are under woeful afflictions. Why, certainly, they cannot but think thus with themselves: Oh, the creature is a vain thing. It is a vain thing to trust in any creature comfort; it may soon be taken away from me, beyond all expectation of mine. Oh I could not, if I were in their condition, but judge of the vanity of the creature. Let me do so now then.

And then, secondly, If I were in their condition, why, my conscience would be freely telling of me and charging of me for the abuse of the mercy that I have had. Suppose that all my comforts were taken

away from me, as from them, do not I think my conscience would presently fly in my face, and tell me how I have abused those mercies that I did enjoy? how I did not make use of my estate for God as I might have done? You who have comfortable estates now, and you think because they are your own that therefore you may do with them as you list; but if God should, by some accident, come and take your estates from you, the first thing that your consciences would do would be this, to charge upon you the abuse of your estates; and then, secondly, to tell you that you did not make that use of your estates for the honour of God's name as you might have done. Suppose God should come upon you by the adversary, or fire, or any other way, and sweep away all in one night, do not you think that your consciences would then tell you, Oh I might have made better use of it for God than I have done? It is an ordinary thing, when a mercy is taken from one, for conscience to accuse then for the abuse of that mercy that he did enjoy; as now, when a man buries a wife, the first thing that conscience will tell one, will be, Oh, I have not performed the duty that I owed to my wife, which I should have done; and so for any mercy, when the mercy is taken away, conscience then hath greater liberty to charge one for the abuse of that mercy than formerly it had. And so we should put ourselves in their case, and put conscience to it and say, Suppose that all the outward comforts which I do enjoy in this world were taken away from me, could I then have a clear conscience, and could I be able to say, Lord, thou that knowest all things knowest that while I did enjoy my estate, it was my care to serve thee with it, and to improve my estate to the uttermost for the glory of thy name. I am afraid that there are not many, which are deprived of their estates, that have their consciences so free in excusing of them; and so I fear that there are not many of you, but if you would put yourselves into their conditions, your conscience would deal more freely with you than now it doth; and that is a second thing that conscience would do if you were in their case.

And then the third thing, If you would but put yourselves into their condition it would be this: you would shorten your outward comforts, but you would enlarge your duties. I verily think that generally our brethren in those parts where the adversary hath been—I do not speak of such that are sottish, but any that have any work of grace—I verily believe they are larger in duties than ever they were before; they do not cut short holy duties so much as formerly. And certainly, if you were in their case, if the Lord should cut you short in respect of your outward comforts, the larger would you be in the performance of holy duties.

Fourthly, If you were in their case, you would have a more serious spirit than now you have. Now you enjoy an outward prosperity, you do not lay to heart how things are between God and you; but now, if God should come and rend away all the outward comforts that now you have, oh that would cause many serious thoughts to be in your mind, and to consider how are things between God and my soul. Things are very sad with me in respect of the world, but how are they in respect of heaven? Oh put yourselves into that condition, that the slightness and vanity of your spirits may be taken off, that you may be now as serious as you would be if you were in their condition.

Fifthly, If you were in their condition, oh you would learn to be content with a little. Therefore now put yourselves into their condition, and think with yourselves, Suppose God should take all from me, then I should bless his name if he would return but a little part of that again. But now I am in my family, and have abundance of comforts, and yet if any one thing doth but cross me, I am froward and discontent. Ay, but if God brought me as low as my brethren, I should bless his name for a little, then I would be glad of bread. Many of them that have lived as comfortably as you now live would be glad of bread and the smallest drink, if they might have but sufficient of that. Why, now put yourselves into their conditions, and bless God for that little you have; and thus you should be in bonds, in affliction with those that are in affliction.

And then, sixthly, Prize peace with God. Those that are in an afflicted condition, oh how do they prize peace with God, and peace with conscience! Now such of them as are godly, they think thus with themselves: Oh, had not we laid up peace with God, and had we not peace with our own consciences, what should we do? But blessed be the name of God, that we have kept our peace with God, and we have peace in our own consciences. In these days of war it is this only that comforts their hearts, they prize it now. Oh, therefore, put yourselves into their conditions, that you may learn to prize peace with God, and peace in your conscience.

And then the seventh and last thing of all is this, If we put ourselves into their condition, certainly you would rise up against popery and tyranny. Suppose you were in Ireland, and there were under that heavy tyranny of those barbarous papists that are there, why, would not this make you to rise against those that are popish, and to think thus: Is this the popish religion? Oh bloody religion, what wickedness would that religion countenance! a cursed religion is popery. You would be ready to charge your children to hate popery as long as they lived; oh the cruel usage of people that have been there! And so the popish

party that have prevailed here should make all to rise against popery, and so against tyranny. What a miserable condition is a people in where a few men shall tyrannise over them. Oh let us join what possibly we can to cast off the yoke of tyranny, that we may be governed by law, and know aforehand when it is that we do offend. Certainly the miseries that have been of late in these three kingdoms cannot but stir up the spirits of those in the kingdom that are not sottish and willing to be slaves, to rise against tyranny, and never suffer it to prevail over them again. By putting ourselves into their conditions, we may come to have our hearts affected in some measure as their hearts are; and thus we shall be sensible, in a right way, of the mournful estate of our brethren.

And to that end, that we may be sensible of the mournful estate of our brethren, it is good for us often to charge ourselves with the great evil of a selfish spirit. What! because I am free myself, and feel nothing myself, shall none of the afflictions of all the churches of God, and the sufferings of all the countries, come near to my heart? Oh base selfish spirit that I have! what is my flesh more than the flesh of others? Charge this upon your souls as in the presence of God, and this will be a means to break your hearts.

And secondly, Let all the mercies that you have been seasoned with the consideration of the thoughts of the afflictions of your brethren, when you sit at your table. Why, I have a full table; but how is it with others? Why, you go to bed, I go to bed, and have my house in peace; but how is it with others of my brethren? When I walk out into the streets, I go about my trade and business; but how is it with others? When I come home again, I see my wife and children and all about me; oh, but how is it still with my brethren? So upon every mercy that you do enjoy, you should as it were season the mercy with the consideration, How stands it with my brethren? As you season your meat with salt, so every mercy that you enjoy should have the consideration of the affliction of your brethren, to be joined with it for the seasoning of that mercy. Certainly your mercies would be a great deal more savoury to you if they were seasoned with the consideration of the afflictions that your brethren do endure.

And then, further, Remember you are in the body. According to that scripture in the 13th of the Hebrews, you are liable to those things that they are; and how just were it with God, if I should not be affected with the miseries of others, that God should bring as great, if not greater upon me. The Lord hath thousands of ways to bring as great afflictions upon you as ever were brought upon any part of the kingdom, and there is no such dangerous sign that God intends it towards you as the being insensible of the afflictions of your brethren. Oh how soon may the Lord, by

secret treachery, by massacres, &c., bring you into as woeful afflictions as they; and therefore, considering how liable you are to the same, or to much greater afflictions, oh be sensible of the miseries of your brethren; the serious thoughts of them would be a mighty argument to work upon the heart.

And then, lastly, Consider that of the apostle Peter: 1 Pet. iv. 17, 18, 'If judgment begins at the house of God, what shall become of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous shall scarcely be saved, where shall the wicked and ungodly appear.' If so many of the righteous servants of God should suffer hard things, and that they should go through such great difficulties to heaven, what shall become of me then? Shall the righteous scarcely be saved?—that is, saved through many difficulties and dangers and sufferings. Then what shall become of me? where shall I appear? for my conscience tells me that there is much unrighteousness in me. And if God's dear saints come to heaven through so much trouble, surely there is trouble reserved for me then. These kind of thoughts would break your hearts, and cause you to mourn with them that mourn; blessed are they that do thus mourn, that are sensible of the afflictions of the people of God, for they shall be comforted. And thus now we have done with that blessedness, the second beatitude, the poor in spirit, and those that mourn.

Now then we are to proceed to the third.

Ver. 5.—'Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.'

'Blessed are the meek.'

First for the word 'meek.' Some think it comes from a Hebrew word that signifies to be thin, or low, or lean; and sometimes I find it expressed by the same word that is used for humility, for they are very near akin. Christ puts them together: 'Learn of me,' saith he, 'for I am humble and meek.'

The Latins express it by the word *mitis*, one that is as it were mute, when he suffers any wrong, *ad sustinendum injuriam tacens*; or else from a word taken from beasts that are not fierce, but are accustomed to one's hand, meek. The word that is in my text it is one that is of a temper of spirit easy to be entreated; of a facile spirit. And the nature of meekness consists especially in the right moderation of the passion of anger—the due gracious moderation of the passion of anger. Those men or women that have power over themselves to moderate the passion of their anger, they are meek.

Now there is a natural meekness sometimes, from the constitution of man's body. Many men are not so prone to anger naturally as other men are, from their very temper of body; others are more choleric in their very temper. And so there is a natural meekness that arises from the strength of reason—a

man that is but a rational man, yet by his reason may be able to curb his anger in great measure. But this meekness must go beyond these—the natural meekness from the temper of the body, or that comes from the strength of reason. And if you would know how it goes beyond them, you may take it in these particulars :

First, One that is meek naturally, he is meek in some outward thing wherein others would be angry ; but this meekness of his that is but natural, it doth quench all zeal for God, it doth not stand with the exercise of the grace of zeal for God. But now spiritual meekness is such, being a grace of the Holy Ghost, as there is no opposition to any other grace ; that is a certain rule. Several vices may be contrary one to another, yet no grace can be contrary to another grace ; therefore those men that are meek spiritually, they are zealous too. They have spiritual principles in them, which makes them meek and able to moderate their anger in their own cause ; yet those principles will make them zealous for God. But now where the principle of meekness is but natural, from the constitution of a man's body, or only power of reason, why, this will quench zeal. Those that are meek thus, they are not acquainted with the grace of zeal for God, as it appears plainly. You have some men and women, you say you cannot anger them—they will never be angry. It may be their children and servants do such things as would anger you, but they are very patient and quiet and meek, and they bear all. Now it may be you think that this is from true grace. No ; and you will know it by this, that their children, when they do anything amiss against them, they are not angry—no, nor though their children sin against God they are not angry. Now this is no gracious meekness. Grace will teach men and women to be meek and gentle when they are crossed themselves, but grace will never teach them to be meek so as not to be angry when God is dishonoured. You shall find that those that are in Scripture set out as the most eminent men for meekness in their own cause, yet when it comes to God's cause they have been the most eminent in zeal. As for the example of Moses, if you read the 12th of Numbers, you shall find that the Lord doth give that testimony of Moses, that he was the meekest man upon earth ; but yet you know the story of Moses, when he came down from the mount and saw how the children of Israel had set up an idol, the golden calf, Moses was all on fire ; and having the tables of stone where the law was written in his hands, and having received them from God himself, yet when he saw that idol, he took those tables and threw them down, and brake them to pieces in his zeal for God ; yea, and after he had done that, he stirs up the people to take their swords and slay their brethren ; and yet Moses was

the meekest man that ever lived upon the face of the earth. We read of Christ himself, that he propounds himself as a pattern of meekness : ' Learn of me, for I am meek.' Yet when he comes to the scribes and pharisees, that were wretched enemies against the power of godliness, though they made an outward show, and so seduced the people, in making them believe that all religion did consist in outward forms, ' Woe,' saith he, ' to you scribes and pharisees, hypocrites.' He pronounces eight woes against them in one chapter, Mat. xxiii., and speaks in a most bitter way. Never did any godly man preach with a greater bitterness, as I may so speak ; for it was a bitter anger that Christ had against the scribes and pharisees in his speaking to them, and yet the meekest man that ever was. It was a bitterness of spirit, and you cannot find more fiery zeal in any against sin than you find in Jesus Christ. When he came and saw how they did abuse the house of God, he threw down the tables of the money-changers, and took cords and made a whip, and whipped them out of the temple. ' The zeal of God's house ate him up.' And so Paul, that was very meek, and writes to Timothy to instruct ' with all meekness those that did oppose themselves,' 2 Tim. ii. 25 ; yet when Paul did but set his eyes upon Elymas, that did seek to draw away Sergius Paulus from the faith, why, ' O thou child of the devil, and full of all subtlety,' Acts xiii. 10. What ! doth any man speak more terribly than he did to Elymas ? So that this meekness is such as hath a mixture of zeal : when a man or woman can be meek in their own cause, can deny themselves in their own cause, and be able to moderate their anger ; but yet when it comes to the cause of God, they can there be all on fire for God—this is the right meekness, the meekness that here is pronounced to be blessed.

But now this meekness, as it is distinguished from natural, so we must inquire wherein it consists. In the moderation of anger in these six particulars :

As, first, In regard of the object of anger. It is that grace whereby we come to be enabled to moderate anger ; that is, first, Not to be angry and froward for nothing, and so as to be able to give an account of our anger. Where there is true meekness, the heart hath so much power, as if I am angry, I am able to give an account of it.

Secondly, When men are angry for everything ;

Or, thirdly, When they are angry for that that is good—angry at the good of our brethren, when they do but their duty ; these are not meek. But now when the soul hath a command of itself, that I will not be angry for anything but that I can give an account of it to God. Indeed many of you when you are angry, you think you are angry in a rational way, and when one asks you, Do you well to be angry ? you can say, Yes, I do well to be angry. But can

you give such an account of it to God as you do to men? Can you say, Lord, I was angry, but it was no more than thou wouldst have me to be, for it was upon such and such just grounds that I was angry? Many are angry with insensible creatures; sometimes a workman angry with his tool, and throws it away; and so likewise angry with brute beasts. That is the first, a moderation of anger in respect of the object; not to be angry at anything but that that we may give an account of to God, and say, Lord, this is the thing that hath provoked my anger, and thou wouldst have me, else I would not be angry.

And then, secondly, A moderation of anger in respect of the time of anger; that is,

First, That it be not too sudden.

Secondly, That it be not unseasonable.

Thirdly, That it be not lasting. In these three things meekness doth moderate anger.

First, That it be not sudden. There is nothing wherein men and women are more sudden than in the passion of anger; and there is nothing wherein they should be more deliberate, if there be a thing wherein there is just cause why you should be angry. Why, you may be angry an hour hence; and it were a good way, where there is anything falls out that provokes to anger you, first weigh and consider of the thing, and then, if there be sufficient cause, let out your anger after. But now, when men and women are suddenly angry, they have gunpowder spirits that a little spark puts them all on a fire in an instant, that one would wonder at the sudden change that is oftentimes in many men and women in a family; all things are quiet now, and on a sudden all things are in a hurly-burly.

And then, secondly, That it be not unseasonable, as now, when you are to perform duties; oh take heed of anger then! Are you to go to prayer? why, whatsoever falls out, if you have the grace of meekness, you would so far curb yourselves as to say, Let passion stay till I have done my prayer. This were an excellent thing if there were this meekness in families. Why, when men and their wives and families are going to prayer, many times the devil will lay before you some temptations to provoke your passion, and he knows that then your prayer is spoiled if he can but put you into a passion; why now, if there be the grace of meekness to overpower anger, and can make anger to be a servant to you and not your lord, you frustrate Satan's design then. Suppose a servant, or neighbour, or child doth otherwise than they ought, yet you can say to anger, Stay here till I have done prayer, and afterwards I will consider of you then; and so when you come to hear the word. Oh it is a dangerous thing to give way to passion at any time, but especially upon a Lord's day! If you be put into a passion then, a ten to one

but you lose the Sabbath; for then your thoughts are rolling about the wrong that is done to you, and about thoughts of revenge, and then you will manifest your displeasure. But now meekness doth moderate anger, to give one power over one's anger so as it shall not be unseasonable.

And then, thirdly, Meekness doth moderate anger in respect of the lastingness of it, that it shall not last longer than it ought to do. Many men's and women's anger is like the fire of hell—being once kindled, it is never quenched; it is unquenchable as the fire of hell is; their dog-days do continue all the year long. You shall have some men and women, if anything have fallen out in their families, and they be got into a fit of passion, you shall have them continue day after day in that fit of passion, so that sometimes even man and wife will not speak one to another in two or three days; this sinful, this far from meekness. If thou hadst this grace of meekness, it would say to anger, Thus far shall you go, and no further. As you can raise it up when you see cause, so you can keep it down too; but many times you know the wind raises up the waves of the sea, and when the winds are down, yet the waves of the sea they are all in a broil, and do mightily rise still, and are very boisterous though the winds are down: so it is with many, though the cause of their anger be taken away, yet their anger having been raised, they are not able to overcome themselves. It is just with men and women here as with your children, if once they be displeased, put them into a cry, and though you give them the thing that they would have, yet they cannot overcome themselves presently: so it is with many, they are not lasting in other things, but in their anger there they last: in any good motion for God, there they are fickle and inconstant, but their passion, that holds. Now meekness it doth moderate anger in regard of the continuance of it.

Fourthly, Meekness doth moderate anger in respect of the measure of it. Why, if I be angry, I will be angry no more than needs must. Why so violent, why so fierce, why so cruel in anger? as many they know not how to be angry, but they must be mad. But now one that hath a meek spirit, he may be angry sometimes; ay, but his meekness will measure out his anger—so much anger and no more, after the proportion to that that I am angry for.

And then the fifth is, The ground from whence anger arises. The ground it is from pride in your hearts, or from some other lust, or from weakness; but now meekness of spirit that doth so much moderate anger, that whensoever I am angry, it shall not be from my pride, nor lusts, nor weakness. Thus meekness moderates anger.

And then the effects of anger. Oh the woeful, evil effects that come from the anger of men and women!

What acts of sin is there committed in one hour, when you give way to passions! There is more sin committed sometimes by a man or woman in one day, when they are in a froward, pettish humour, than by others that are in a meek, quiet humour, for a year, yea, it may be all their lives. Thou mayest do that in one day, that it may be may cause thee to repent all thy life after. Oh, sin is multiplied almost infinitely when we come to a passion! Passion and anger doth heat the lusts that are in the hearts of men and women, and therefore they are very active in their sin in the time of a passion—as Moses, when he came down, in his holy zeal he broke both the tables on which the law was written: so we may say that people in their sinful passion they break both the tables of the law by their woeful distempers and sinful actions. What reviling speeches, what revengeful thoughts, what words and desperate resolutions are there in the time of anger! But now, where there is meekness in the heart, it pulls anger back, and will not suffer it to proceed in any sinful effects. Nay, saith meekness, what hath the Lord given me this affection in my soul for? is it not for his glory? What! is it for the producing of such base and sinful effects as these are? The Lord forbid it. Oh the evil of anger! Oh remember in the days of your humiliation to be humbled for the wonderful wicked effects of your sinful anger! And you that have not matter to humble your souls before God when you are in secret, you want matter for prayer, oh do but consider of some fit of anger that you have been in, and see whether there are not sins enough when you have been in that to afford matter for your confessions.

And then meekness doth moderate anger in respect of the end, that when I am angry I will not be angry for myself. You are angry sometimes, but what comes of it? Now a meek heart, when it is angry, it will look at this. Oh let it be regulated so far as I may have good of it; let me have holy ends and holy aims in my anger. As now, am I angry with a child; why, it is to the end that I might shew such displeasure against such an offence as that the child may amend, and that the servant may amend. The Lord that knows all things, knows that when I do let out my anger against any man, or woman, or child, or servant, I do aim at the good of them; and did I believe that to be gentle towards them, and not to manifest my anger, would do them more good, why, they should never see me angry. This should be the resolution of every godly parent, master, &c. Oh, 'blessed are the meek;' blessed are they that are thus meek, that have thus much power to overcome the passion of their anger—they are blessed. Now I should have shewn many ways why those who are thus meek are blessed here, and for ever shall be blessed. There is as much said of this grace of meek-

ness to set out the blessedness of it, as almost any grace I know, next to faith itself, that is the great mother grace.

Why, thou that art meek art like God thy Father. When God would shew his glory to Moses in Exod. xxxiii., xxxiv., was not this a great part of his glory, 'The Lord long-suffering and gracious?' It is the glory of the Father to be so.

And it is the glory of Jesus Christ to be so; for, saith Christ, 'Learn of me, for I am meek.' Christ calls out no other grace that he would have his disciples follow him in but humility and meekness. Why, blessed Saviour, why dost not thou speak of those other excellent graces of thine? Thou hadst grace without measure, and when thou wouldst have thy disciples learn of thee, why dost not mention, Learn confidence of thee, and heavenly-mindedness of thee, and despising of the world, or any other grace? No, saith Christ; if you would be my disciples, I would commend this to you—I am humble and meek. Why, was that the great commendations of Christ? Yes, the Lord Jesus accounted it his glory to be meek. Do not you account it a dishonour? Why, is that a dishonour to thee that was an honour to Jesus Christ? Shall Jesus Christ reckon it his glory to be a meek man, and shalt not thou account it to be thy glory? Oh blessed be those that are like God the Father and God the Son!

And they have much of the Spirit of God. What was the Spirit of God compared to more than meekness? When the Holy Ghost did appear upon the head of Jesus Christ, John iii. 16, he did appear in the form of a dove. Now they say of the dove it hath no gall; it is the emblem of meekness. Therefore, if thou wouldst be like either Father, Son, or Holy Ghost, thou must be a man or woman of a meek and gentle spirit. 'Blessed are those that are meek,' for they have much of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in them. It is very observable that God in his sacrifices he would not have lions, and tigers, and such wild creatures to be offered in sacrifice to him, nor no birds of prey, but he would have the dove and the pigeon, and the lamb and the sheep; the Lord doth regard rather such sacrifices than the froward, perverse spirits of men. I will give you now but one scripture for the blessedness of meek spirits. There are many promises made to those that are meek. Here is one great one in my text; but for the present only this one scripture, that one would think all those who have found any good by Scripture should for ever lay upon their hearts to meekness their spirits,—and especially it is applied to women, for they are the weaker sex, and passion and anger comes from weakness. Therefore the Holy Ghost, in 1 Peter iii. 1-3, where he is speaking unto women, exhorting them shew themselves the daughters of Sarah; saith

'Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel.' But how then? women are much addicted to these things, therefore the Holy Ghost mentions these particulars. But, saith he, 'Let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible.' What is that? what particular will the Holy Ghost instance in for the hidden man of the heart? Even, saith he, 'a meek and a quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.' Give me any scripture that puts such a commendation upon any particular grace. Indeed we have in effect other commendations, that come to as much, of faith,—for that is the great grace of the covenant by which Christ is made ours,—but for an explicit expression almost of any grace whatsoever, a meek and a quiet spirit is of great price with God, or, as some of your books have it, is much set by. Why would you have brave clothes and ornaments? You account them to be precious; to have costly laces and costly dressings and attire—you think to go in things that are costly. Ay, but what are these to God? As if the Holy Ghost should say, If you have but the plainest garment you are as acceptable with God; he looks into the inward man. Now to see a

man or woman to have brave clothes, and have a froward, perverse spirit, oh, such are loathsome to God,—God looks upon those as having an ugly dress upon them. But now though you be never so clothed outwardly, yet have you a meek and a quiet spirit, and that from the grace of the Spirit of God in you? Oh, saith the Holy Ghost, here is an ornament! this is of great price with God; it is much set by with God; oh be in love with it. You use to say when you have a friend comes to you, If I did but know what you love I would have it for you. Now women and others say thus to God: Oh that I did but know what thou dost love, what God doth most value! Can you say, as in the presence of God, that if you did but know what God loved most you would endeavour to the uttermost you could that God should have it? Now behold here what the Holy Ghost saith. The Holy Ghost saith this to all women,—and so it is true of men and women and servants,—that a meek and a quiet spirit is of great price with God. Therefore now though you cannot remember other things, yet go away and conclude I have been indeed of a froward and pettish temper heretofore,—and oh the sins that I have committed in my frowardness!—but the Lord hath commended meekness to me. The text saith that they are blessed, and another scripture saith that it is much set by of God. Oh the Lord give us meek spirits that we may be blessed!

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## SERMON XII.

OR,

### MEEK PERSONS SUBJECTS FOR CHRIST TO COMFORT.

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*'Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.'*—MAT. v. 5.

GOD doth not prize the gay things in the world. Gold and silver and land and possessions and crowns, what are these to God? Wherefore the Lord saith in Isa. xl., that 'all the nations of the earth are to him but as the drop of the bucket, and as the small dust of the balance; nothing, yea, less than nothing.' He doth not regard the nations of the world with all their pomp and glory, but now a meek and a quiet spirit God prizes; that is high in God's esteem, that is worth a great deal with God, though all the

nations of the earth are no more worth than a little dust is worth. Blessed then is the meek.

We add further, Blessed is the meek, for they are the subjects that Christ is anointed by the Father to comfort, to preach glad tidings to. Surely then they are blessed. I say, Christ, as he is anointed by the Father to preach the gospel to the poor, and to those that mourn, so unto the meek; in Isa. lxy., 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the