

SERMON IX.

OR,

THE COMFORTS OF MOURNERS FOR SIN.

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

To proceed; fourthly, Know it is the very way of God in bringing sinners to eternal life, to bring them in a way of mourning for sin. The bringing from the captivity of Babylon was as a type of God's bringing sinners from the captivity of sin; 'With supplications and weeping will I lead them,' saith God. It is the way that God uses to bring sinners to himself, the way to Jerusalem which signifies the vision of peace, it is Bethany the house of sorrows; Christ went that way when he went to Jerusalem; and certainly the way that God hath brought all his servants in all ages to true comfort it hath been by sorrow; the way to the valley of Beracho, of blessing, is by the way of Bacah, the valley of tears. In these wanton times there are some that think they have gotten a new way to comfort; much good may do them with their new way for comfort. Some think that there is a speedier way to comfort than that which Christ hath set here in the word; he professed that those are the blessed ones that are the mourners. They shall have comfort, and if thou thinkest that that is but a legal thing, even that that Christ preached in this sermon of his, if thou thinkest him a legal preacher for preaching that the way of comfort is by mourning, thou mayest enjoy thy thoughts; and if thou durst venture that comfort which thou hast otherways, go on with thy boldness; but Christ he propounds this way, and saith, Those that are mourners, they are they that I take care to comfort, Christ is anointed to preach glad tidings to the mourners.

Fifthly, Know this for thy comfort, that it is the work of the Spirit, that is sent into the world to be the Comforter, to convince of sin, John xvi. 8. You find that Christ promising the Comforter to come, what shall the Comforter do? The first thing that the Comforter shall do shall be to convince of sin, to convince souls of their sinful estate, what their state is out of Jesus Christ, what their wretched estate is, the Spirit, even the comforting Spirit, shall convince, saith the text. Now one would rather have thought, according to the ways of men, that it had rather been the spirit of the law, a legal spirit to convince of sin;

but it is the Spirit that is the comforting Spirit that doth convince of sin, and therefore if so be thou hast not this conviction of sin, whatever thou mayest speak of the comforts of the Holy Ghost, certainly there is a mistake in thee, for the Holy Ghost when he comes to comfort, he comes that way into the heart, first, to convince of sin; therefore thou who hast thy spirit convinced of sin, of that unbelief that is in thy heart, and convinced powerfully so as to be affected, for that is the convincing of the Holy Ghost to set home things so as to affect the heart with it, let this be a comfort to thee. O Lord! through thy merey, I am not only in the way that thou ledest on those that thou hast a purpose to save, but I have a work of the Comforter; I hope he is come to my soul, he hath convinced me of my sin, and I find my heart affected for my sin in sorrow in another way than formerly I have done.

Sixthly, Another way of comfort to the mourners for sin is this, that the Lord prizeth this thy mourning. Thou thinkest thou canst do but little for God, thou hast a wretched sinful soul, and thou art weak and unable to do much, but canst thou mourn; know that mourning, being such mourning as hath been opened, it is a sacrifice unto God as acceptable as any sacrifice thou canst tender up unto him, so in Ps. li, 'The sacrifices of God are a broken heart: a broken and a contrite spirit, O God, thou wilt not despise.' They are instead of all sacrifices, therefore when thou hast no sacrifice to tender up to God, yet hast thou not a broken spirit for thy sin? God highly esteems of that, yea, let me tell thee this, there is nothing that God esteems more than the tears of a broken heart, than that that comes from a broken spirit; and that is a blessing, for godly sorrow comes from faith as well as from sense of sin;—I say nothing next to the blood of Jesus Christ, that is in higher esteem by God than this, and therefore thou mayest have comfort for the present.

Sevently, Know that however the difference of sin is a great matter in our eyes, and it should be so, we should labour to look upon our sin in the great-

ness of it, with all its aggravations, yet when it comes into the hand of Jesus Christ to satisfy for, great and small sins make no such difference with him in the work of his mediation. If you spill water in a house out of a pail it makes a great show, but there is no great difference seen if you pour it into the Thames; so though in our consciences the difference of sin is much, yet when it comes to the infinite sea of the mediation and satisfaction of Jesus Christ, and the grace that is there, the difference is not so much. Oh that only such as are mourners for sin might hear this, except that the hearing of it might be a means to break the hearts of others!

Eighthly, Further, know this for thy comfort, that so long as receiving comfort from the word makes thee sensible of thine unworthiness, that sense of thine unworthiness should not hinder thee from taking comfort. This is a certain rule, when the taking comfort makes me more sensible of mine unworthiness, then the sense of mine unworthiness should not hinder me from taking comfort. For this is the great matter that troubles those that are mourners—they are afraid that they should presume in taking comfort; but take this rule, If the taking comfort makes thee more sensible of thine unworthiness, that sense of thine unworthiness should not hinder thee from taking hold of comfort. And that might be the first rule of direction, as well as a rule of encouragement, to those that mourn for sin.

But yet further, There are divers rules to help those that are mourners how to order their spirits in seeking comfort.

And the first rule is, Labour for a quiet, patient heart, for sorrow is tedious to flesh and blood; but now the sorrow that is for sin hath a mixture of the grace of God with it. And therefore if mourning for sin comes to make the heart to be impatient, to fret and vex, it is not right. But mourning for sin it hath a sweetness in it, and therefore it should make thee patient under God's hand, waiting for the time when God will speak comfort to thy soul. Lord, here I lie, and am sensible of so great an evil that is upon me, that I know all the creatures in heaven and earth cannot comfort me in this condition wherein I am; and therefore I am waiting for the good day, for the time of love, when thou shalt speak peace to my soul. And here I resolve to be waiting upon thee in the use of all means as I am able, till my last breath, whatever becomes of me. Let that be a rule for direction how to order thy heart when thou art in a mourning condition.

And then a second rule is this, Do not only lie poring upon the dungeon that thou art in, as it were; but while thou art mourning for sin, though yet thou hast not assurance that thy sins be forgiven thee, yet look up to the promise. It may be thou thinkest it

doth not belong to thee, but let thine eye be upon it. Look up to the brazen serpent if sin hath stung thee, as those that were stung in the wilderness looked up to the brazen serpent: present the covenant of grace to thy soul. As the presenting of the law hath a power to terrify the heart, so the presenting of the gospel it hath a power to draw the heart to it. There is a quickening in the grace of the gospel when it is beheld. It is not as a mere object for the eye or understanding, but there is a virtue in it. It comes into the heart, to work upon the heart; many that are mourners they suffer their hearts to sink down, only to consider of the blackness of their souls, but look not up to the graciousness of the promise. We have a most excellent scripture for that in Ps. lxxxvi. 4, 5, 'Rejoice the soul of thy servant,' saith David. It seems David was in a mournful state; now mark what he saith, 'Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul;' that is the way for joy. Thou prayest unto the Lord, Oh that thou wouldst rejoice my soul; and yet thou lettest thy soul fall grovelling upon the ground. 'But rejoice the soul of thy servant: for, O Lord, to thee do I lift up my soul.' This scripture is of exceeding use to mourners, for there is nothing that mourners for sin are more faulty in than when they desire joy to their hearts, yet they suffer their hearts to lie grovelling below; they do not stir up themselves, and strive to lift up their souls. 'For unto thee do I lift up my soul,' saith David. And in verse 5, 'For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy to all them that call upon thee.' The Lord is ready, if thou canst but lift up thy soul and be ready. Therefore take heed that the anguish and trouble of thy soul doth not hinder thee from looking upon the promise, from listening unto the promise that is made unto thee. We find in Exod. vi. 9, that when Moses spake to the children of Israel, the text saith, 'They hearken not to Moses.' Why, what did Moses come for? He came to bring a message to them for their comfort, but they hearkened not to him. Why, 'For anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.' The anguish of their spirits and the cruel bondage was such as made them not to hearken to Moses. Take heed that this be not thy condition, thou that art a mourner for sin, that when the time shall come that I should apply the promise unto thee, that for anguish of spirit and for cruel bondage thou dost not hearken to what I said to thee. It is not good for a man that is going over a narrow bridge, and under which there is a great stream and a deep river, for him, especially being weak in his head, to be looking upon the river and considering of the depth of it, and what a gulf it is that he should be swallowed up unto if he should fall; this very looking were enough to make him fall. But let him

look right on to the shore, and go as carefully as he can, and when he is got upon the shore, then he may look back safely, and bless God for his deliverance. So it should be with the heart that is afflicted for sin. Thou art mourning, and lookest upon it as a dreadful gulf that thou art ready to be swallowed up of; thou art poring upon that now that may endanger thee to be swallowed up of it. But the truth is, when thou art upon this brink, (for the work of repentance it is a kind of brink,) thou art to look on to the promise, to the grace of God in the gospel that is tendered unto thee; and when thou art got upon shore, and art enabled to apply the promise of grace, then thou mayest look back to that dreadful gulf which thou wast ready to be swallowed up of, and then bless God for it.

And then a third rule in seeking after comfort is this, Be not more solicitous about getting comfort to thyself than about the glory of God; even when thou art mourning for sin, labour to get thy heart to this frame, to be as solicitous and careful about the glory of God as about comfort to thyself. We find this by experience, that many which are afflicted much for their sin they are altogether for comfort. Oh that one would speak comfort to them; and no word is acceptable unto them except it bring comfort, and that immediately, to them. But now, in the meantime, they are little sensible of the dishonour that God hath had, or how God should have honour. Whereas the heart that is rightly wrought upon, when it apprehends the evil of sin, it is as well taken up thus: Oh the dishonour that my sin hath brought to God, and how can that dishonour be made up! Oh, if I should live any further to the dishonour of this blessed God, what should become of me! how much better had it been I had never been born, than to live to the dishonour of that God that now I see to be so blessed in himself, and so infinitely worthy of all honour from his creatures. Ay, this is good, when the honour of God takes up thy heart, and thou art solicitous about that; and because thou canst not make up that breach, therefore thou listenest after that that thou hearest of in the gospel of Christ. And yet thou art further careful of this, that whatsoever rule may be propounded to make against thy sin, or to further thee in any way of obedience to God, thy heart doth as greedily embrace those rules as those rules that make more immediately for thy comfort. I would express myself in this similitude, that you may more fully understand what I mean: Many who have weak stomachs, and their nature almost spent, they would fain have some spirits to refresh them, and they are altogether for hot waters; they find themselves cold, and want strength, and they think to take such cordials, and to take hot waters, because they have more spirits and heat in them, and are

more suitable to their condition; whereas the truth is, hot waters do but burn them up and spoil them, and makes them still weaker and weaker, and doth but consume that natural heat that they have. Whereas a wise physician when he comes and asks them what such a one took; why, every day he drunk such hot waters. Why, saith he, he hath spoiled himself; he should rather have purged out the ill-humours in the body, then take broth and other things; and though they be not so hot, yet by degrees they will strengthen nature, and then begin to nourish, and so there will be good blood, and from good blood there will be good spirits raised, and they are the best spirits. When one drinks hot waters they may be in a flame and heat for a while; ay, but that will not hold. But if one can come to have heat from good blood, that will hold, and so the man lives and comes to be strong. Thus it is for all the world in Christians; there are some that are very sensible of their sin, and they would have all comfort—they would have that which is altogether spirits preached to them, nothing else but the very name of Christ, and free grace to them; well, it may be that may heat thee a little while, but the truth is, this heat vanisheth and comes to nothing. Whereas the other, if he be a wise physician for the soul, he will apply that word that may purge out the evil from their hearts; that word that carries the life of sanctification, and walking with God in the ways of holiness, that should put them upon those things. Together with the free grace of the gospel, he will present Christ as a king to rule in the heart, as well as a priest to offer sacrifice; and this will breed good blood. Therefore be solicitous about the glory of God—how thou shouldst live to his praise, as how thou shouldst come to get comfort to thyself; for otherwise the greedy seeking of comfort to thyself may come to be thy undoing.

Fourthly, And then further thou must seek for comfort in order unto grace, rather than grace in order unto comfort. You shall have those that vanish and come to nothing in their seeking for grace; they only seek for grace that they may have comfort, and have no love to grace any otherways but because it may bring them comfort and ease to their consciences. But now a godly soul it rather seeks for comfort for the furtherance of grace, than grace for the furtherance of comfort. Why, why wouldst thou have comfort? Why, by that means I hope my heart will be more enlarged for God; and the more peace I give to my soul, the greater furtherance will this be to the grace that is in my soul, and therefore would I have comfort. But a hypocrite he would have grace because he can have no comfort without it; but the other would have comfort because else grace would not so much thrive in him.

Fifthly, And then the last rule that I would give

to mourners is this—If thou canst not be able to exercise a faith of assurance, try what thou canst do to exercise a faith of adherence; and that thou mayest do at any time, that every one hath liberty to do. You will say it is only believers can do this; but thou dost not know whether there be some seed of faith that is begotten in thy heart already, yea or no; and therefore let thy condition be the saddest that possibly can be conceived. Thou sayest that thou hast been such and such a wretched sinner; well, we will grant it. Yet I say this very instant, when thou lookest upon thyself as such a vile sinner, there is nothing to the contrary but that there may be a putting forth of the faith of adherence—that is, the casting of thy soul upon the free grace and the full grace of God in Christ, and cleaving to it. You will say, But I may presume; have I any right to it? I say this, There is never any soul had any other right to the promise of grace but by casting itself upon it; that gave it right. Now it may be thou hast not the faith of assurance—that is, to conclude thus: Well, Christ is mine, and because I know he is so, therefore I will trust and believe in him. But thou mayest do thus: I see the promise that is tendered to wretched, sinful creatures, and therefore, though I do not know that he is mine, yet I will venture my soul and eternal estate upon it; I will lie here and roll my soul upon this free grace of God in Christ for pardon, and likewise for sanctification and salvation, and for all good. This is the way of getting comfort, I say, to endeavour what you may to put forth an act of the faith of adherence in cleaving, though thou canst not put forth an act of assurance. Thus I have endeavoured to speak to those that are mourners to comfort them; for Christ saith, 'They shall have comfort.' If I could but now bring the promise that Christ hath made here to any one soul, though it may fall out so that some may be hardened and abuse what is said, yet it will be enough, and Christ will accept of it. If the comfort promised may be brought by this sermon home to any one soul, Christ saith, 'Thou shalt be comforted;' but how shall this be effected but by the word, and therefore thou dost well to come and attend upon the word. It may be thou hast come oftentimes to hear the word. Ay, but it hath not comforted thy soul; there hath not been a union between the word and thy soul, and so thou hast gone away comfortless. Well, yet come again; do not say that it is in vain for me to attend the word, for I have heard, I am sure, as precious truths delivered as ever can be heard by any, and I have not found them to comfort me. Well, though they have not at that time, there hath not been a close between thy heart and those truths; yet still come again and again, and at length there will be a close between the word and thy soul; and that may be darted into thy soul by

the Spirit of God in one sentence that thou hadst not before in all thy life. Oh, saith one, I find my heart troubled for sin, and mourning for sin; I would have comfort, and God knows I read the word, and there I find precious and excellent truths; ay, but they do not get to my heart. Well, I come to hear the word, and I find that I get nothing thereby; ay, but I will come again, and wait at the pool to see when the angel will come and stir in my heart. Well, now though it come not yet, yet at length thou shalt be able to say, as Mr Glover, that spake to his friend Austen, though he could have no comfort for a long time, yet at length when he came in sight of the stake he cries to his friend, 'O he is come, he is come.' So in the use of means wait while the word shall come and close with thy heart, that thou mayest have comfort. Well, I cannot say but that God hath comforted my soul in my mourning condition. Oh that I did but know whether it were the comfort of Jesus Christ, yea or no! Well, I will give you two or three notes to know whether it be the comfort of Jesus Christ or no.

In the first place, If thy joy and comfort be the joy of the Lord, why then it is thy strength: so Nehemiah, chap. viii. 10, saith to the people. You find joy brings strength, comfort brings strength to your souls. As thus, canst thou say, Well, through God's mercy, though I were weak heretofore, and could not overcome such and such corruptions, since God hath spoken peace to my soul I have found more strength to come into my heart to overcome my corruptions than ever I did before. Why, is this thy comfort? doth it work thus? Peace to thee, it is from God: that that carries unto God it comes from him, it is* a delusion or a fancy. Hypocrites are discovered in this as much as in anything; though when they are in terrors, then they will take heed of sin, and set upon duty; but when they have peace, then they grow more loose. But it is otherwise in such whose hearts are sincere with God.

Secondly, That that is the true comfort of Christians, is felt by that that at first wrought it. Look, what begets a thing doth nourish it, so the philosophers say; it is so in nature, and it is so in the heart of man. Look, what nourishes thy comfort, that did beget thy comfort; and what begets it, that will nourish it, and nothing else. Now then, if thy comfort be truly spiritual, be from the Spirit of Jesus Christ in thy heart, then there is nothing that will nourish thy comfort more than Jesus Christ in thy heart; and it makes thee therefore long after more communion with Jesus Christ. Hypocrites have comfort: but what doth nourish and maintain their comfort? Outward things that they enjoy, the esteem of the world, their gifts and parts and en-

* Qu. 'otherwise it is' ?—Ed.

largements maintain their comfort. But now the comforts of the saints are such as are maintained by higher principles. As you know, the Scripture compares joy to light; now we know in nature there is a light that is maintained and fed by mean things, as the light of a candle. But then there is the light of the sun. Now that light is of another nature; that is not fed by such low and base things as the light of candles are. Now in Scripture the joy of the wicked is compared to the light of a candle; but the joy of the saints is compared to the light of the sun: Prov. iv. 18, 'The righteous is as the sun, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.' Now if thou findest this, that the light that thou hast in thy soul is maintained from principles that are above, from the Sun of righteousness shining into thy heart, surely it is a right comfort.

And then thirdly, If thy comfort be such as doth rule all other comforts in thy heart—I mean the comfort in hope of the pardon of thy sin. The comforts of a hypocrite are such, that though they are much affected with joy, yet it is not able to overrule the natural comfort they have, neither can it eat out the corrupt joy that was in their souls. But now the joy of the saints, I say it is such as overrules natural joy, and eats out corrupt and sinful joy. As the light of the sun, you know, it will put out the light of the kitchen fire, and darken the light of the candle, so the light and heat of true comfort in the soul will eat out that carnal joy that was before: saith Austin, How sweet is it to want such sweetnesses. There was a time that I thought I could not tell how in the world to be without the sweetness of such and such lusts. But now, oh how sweet is it to be without them! So many of you must live jollily; ay, but the joy that you have, what is it but joy in base and low things? it is nothing but corrupt joy which you have. But now, if you had the comforts of the Holy Ghost, it would eat out that joy, so that there would be no place for such corrupt joy as now your hearts take such content in: and thus much for the speaking to those that are mourners. We have yet a word or two to speak,

First, To those that have not yet been such mourners, and then to speak to the saints to put them on to mourn yet further, seeing Christ promises such comfort.

For those who are shy of mourning. There are a generation of men that are so shy of mourning, they think it will bring them to despair if they should give but any way in their mourning for their sin; and therefore, though sometimes they think their hearts begin to be touched by the word, they labour with all their might to put off that word, and they will come no more to hear if they meet with a word that comes to their consciences and cuts to the quick.

They will come no more; they cannot sleep so quietly that night as they did formerly; they look upon mourning for their sin with such a shy eye, as if it were the most wickedest thing in the world. Oh, poor deluded soul, thou art infinitely mistaken! Remember this text, and know that by this text thou mayest—if thou well acknowledge this to be the book of God, and these to be the words of Christ—know that thou art mistaken. Christ saith that they are blessed—'Blessed are those that mourn;' if thou wouldst come to be a blessed man, entertain even a spirit of mourning. Doth the Spirit of God begin to come to thy soul through the word? be willing to open thy heart to him, and entertain it, and make much of that word. Remember that text—I speak of it but by way of allusion—in Dan. vii. 28, saith Daniel there, 'My cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me; but I kept the matter in my heart.' It is a very observable place; Daniel had something revealed by God unto him. It is true, the case is different, Daniel's and yours; but there was a message of God revealed unto him, and the text saith, 'That the thoughts of his heart did trouble him, and his countenance was even changed.' Well, would he cast it off now? No; but I kept the matter in my heart for all that. I verily believe that some of you coming to hear the word, there is sometime darted into your spirits that doth trouble your thoughts when you lie upon your beds and awake in the night season; there is something that troubles your hearts, and you will go into company to put it off. Oh no, but you should keep it rather. How dost thou know but that now the Lord is in a way to make thee blessed? Thou dost go on before in a way that tended to wrath and misery, in a cursed way. Now the Lord Christ is coming to thee to make thee blessed, for aught thou knowest, and thou hast an opportunity for blessedness that, perhaps, if thou shalt reject, thou shalt never have again. Thou wilt now put off the word that doth now begin to work with thee. It may be, if thou shouldst, the Lord may say, Let the word never strike thy heart more, let the Spirit never accompany this word more; and then upon thy sickbed, when thou wouldst have comfort, this scripture may be brought against thee, 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted;' and thou hadst a wretched heart, that didst reject the ways of the Spirit, that would have made thee mourn. Oh, as ever any of you would have comfort upon your sickbeds and deathbeds, be willing to mourn, and follow on the work of the Holy Ghost, when it doth begin to stir your hearts in a mourning way for your sin! and be not put off by any conceit whatsoever; though some perhaps have taught a new way to make people wholly abandon mourning, yet know that it is the old way which the saints of God

have gone on heretofore in; and therefore embrace this, and to the end that thou mayest embrace it, take these few directions.

In the first place, It is a good way for men that find their hearts begin to be troubled for their sin, for them to get alone, to get out of the way from other company, and to retire themselves. At any time when thou findest thy heart begin to be troubled, retire thyself, get alone, be musing of thy sin, and lay the rule to thy heart all alone between God and thy soul. It is a very excellent observation that we may have from that of Peter when he had committed that great sin, and Christ did look upon him; you know the text saith, 'He went out and wept bitterly.' But I find, in one of the Gospels, it is said more than 'he went out';—though that would serve our turn, that he would not stay among the company, but when he would fall a-mourning he gets alone—but I find in Mark's Gospel, chap. xiv. 72, it is said, 'And when he thought thereon, he wept.' Now the word that is translated 'He thought thereon,' *ἐπιβύβλυσε*, those that understand the original know it is a word that signifies any kind of violence that a man uses upon himself, and so by some translated, 'The casting out himself'—a using a violence upon himself in casting himself out from the company; he had enough of them. Oh do thou so when thou feelest the Spirit of God begin to stir and work in thy heart! even cast out thyself, as it were, from company, and labour to work upon thy thoughts those things that may affect thy heart further.

Secondly, Present God to thy soul to the uttermost that thou art able. Consider that thou hast to deal with an infinite God in all thy ways; present God and Christ to thy soul. You will say, I dare not. Ay, but be not afraid of this; you must one day see the Lord in his glory, and therefore present the Lord to thy soul now in his glory.

Thirdly, And then do not satisfy your hearts in any duty till you find your hearts beginning to break; do thou call thyself to account, I am now praying to God, and I can pray, 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them.' But now do I find my heart mourning for them, I speak of my sins, do I acknowledge them in the bitterness and trouble of my soul? Oh, this were an excellent frame, not to leave off till thou findest thy heart somewhat to stir. Ay, but you will say, Oh, but I cannot get my heart to stir; God knows I would give a great deal if every time I went into the presence of God I could get my heart to lament and mourn for my sin; oh, but I cannot. It is well that thou sayest that thou wouldst do it, whereas you have some that think if once they be believers, why, then, should they mourn? Now for the convincing of this vain opinion, know but thus much, that the truth is, there is rather more mourn-

ing that is required and used to be preached by the saints after the assurance of the pardon of sin than before it. I say more, and I will give you that notable example of David. You find that when David had sinned, and the prophet came to convince him of his sin, David said he had sinned; the prophet, in the name of God, saith to him, 'The Lord hath done away thy sin.' But now a long time after, when David made the 51st Psalm, you shall find he fell a-mourning afresh; and yet his sin was forgiven before, and he knew it was forgiven, and yet do but observe the 51st Psalm, what the title is that David gives to the psalm, 'To the chief musician, a psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him after he had gone in to Bathsheba.' So that Nathan had come to him before he makes this psalm, and Nathan, when he came to him, he told him his sin was forgiven, and yet he makes this psalm, and laments his sin in bitterness, and cries to God to restore the joy of his salvation, that the bones that he had broken might rejoice. His very bones were broken, notwithstanding he had that message from God that his sin was forgiven. If the Lord should send a messenger from heaven to tell any one of you, man, woman, all the sins that ever thou hast committed in all thy life are freely forgiven, what wouldst thou do now? Truly thou hast much cause upon this, this evening to get into thy closet and to lament thy sin, and this night, if it were possible, to water thy couch with thy tears—as David saith, he made it swim; therefore the assurance of the pardon of our sin is no hindrance to mourning for sin, only it makes our mourning more sweet and evangelical than it was before. And therefore for thy help, that thou mayest get thy heart thus to mourn, look up for the spirit of mourning: Zech. xii. 10, 'I will pour the spirit of grace and supplication, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one is in bitterness for his first-born.' Mark, God hath not only promised comfort to the mourners, but he hath promised mourning to the sinners too. Why, thou art not excluded, the promise is infinite: 'I will pour out the spirit of grace and supplication, and they shall mourn.' Why, Lord God, I have a hard heart, yet if thou wilt pour that Spirit of thine upon me, I shall mourn; therefore look up to God and plead the promise. And then that other promise, 'I will take away the heart of stone, and give them a heart of flesh;' why, Lord, this promise of thine is not to such and such upon such and such conditions, but a free and absolute promise.

And then it is a good way to converse with mourners, to go into the company of such as are broken-hearted Christians. It will make a man

think thus : Why, Lord God, such a one that walks so inoffensively, so graciously, yet what a broken heart hath such a one. I have a wretched heart, and yet I cannot find my heart break ; thus the very society of poor broken hearts will be a mighty help to thee.

And then, fourthly, If you cannot mourn, then mourn that you cannot mourn. Oh this will be acceptable unto God. You will say, I cannot have command over my heart to mourn for sin as I desire. Ay, but canst not thou go to God and make thy moan, and complain of this as the greatest evil that is upon thee : Lord, I account this dull, hard heart of mine as a most fearful evil upon me ?

And then, fifthly, Do not give way to yourselves to take any joy or comfort in anything in this world till you get your hearts broken for your sin. Will not my heart yield in way of mourning for sin, it shall not rejoice then ; I will not let it out to any vain mirth and joy until I can get it to break, and

although heretofore I took content in such and such company, and in the use of the creature. It is true, it is lawful for a man to take comfort, but is it convenient for such a man as I that can never mourn for my sin ? Nay, I will charge this upon my heart, first to labour to be affected for sin, and to mourn for sin, and then I hope I shall take more comfort both in God and his creatures than heretofore.

And then, lastly, Oh take heed of sinning after mourning, thou that wouldst have such a mourning heart as is here spoken of in this my text for thy sin. Take heed that if ever God begins to break thy heart and help thee to mourn, that thou do not sin wilfully after mourning. If God begins to wound thy heart for thy sin, above all times thou hadst need now to be watchful and careful over thyself. Oh let me lay a deep charge upon thy soul to look to itself, that now being troubled for such and such a sin, thou do not after this give way and liberty to thy soul to commit the same sin again.

SERMON X.

OR,

AN EXHORTATION TO MOURNERS FOR SIN.

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

I HAVE but a word or two for exhortation further about this argument of mourning for sin.

It is an exhortation even to those that have mourned for sin, to mourn still, to make it a continued work. I told you that the assurance of the pardon of sin is no hindrance to mourning for it, but should rather be a furtherance, as it was in David ; and therefore you who are the people of God, God expects that you should mourn for sin, for you know how sin is against the holiness of God, the blessed will of God, more than others do ; you know what price was paid for the purchase of the pardon of it more than others do, and therefore do you mourn. Your sins they grieve the Spirit of God more than others' do. The sins of other men may provoke God's Spirit, but yours grieve God's Spirit, Eph. iv. 30 ; your sins do more hurt than others' do, therefore do you mourn. You know what the great mischief is that sin doth in the world, Rom. viii. 21, 22 ; sin makes the whole creation to groan under the burden

of it, and shall not you be sensible of so much evil of sin as remains in your hearts ? You know that sin is a greater evil than all afflictions whatsoever, and therefore do you mourn ; go under the burden of sin with a heavy heart as long as you live. It is not long that God hath to glorify himself in your sorrow, it will not be long but you shall be delivered from your sin ; but so long as you have this body of sin about you, God expects mourning from you. God expects from you not only to mourn for your own sin, but to mourn for the sins of others, 'and blessed are they that do so, they shall be comforted.'

First, We are to mourn for the sins of others. We have very remarkable scripture for this, Ezra ix. 3. Oh the lamentable condition that Ezra was in for the sins of his people ! he doth rend his garments, and sits down astonished for their sins. And David in Ps. cxix. 53, 'Horror takes hold upon me,' saith David. What ! was there any great judgment near him ? No ; 'Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the