

SERMON XXV.

CHRIST'S memorable Address to the Daughters of Jerusalem, in his Way to the Place of his Execution.

LUKE xxiii. 27, 28, &c.

And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them, said, Daughters of Jerusalem weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.

THE sentence of death once given against Christ, the execution quickly follows. Away they lead him from Gabbatha to Golgotha, longing as much to be nailing him to the cross, and feeding their eyes with his torments, as the eagle doth to be tearing the flesh, and drinking the blood of that lamb she hath seized in her talons, and is carrying away to the top of some rock to devour.

The Evangelist here observes a memorable passage that fell out in their way to the place of execution; and that is, the lamentations and wailing of some that followed him out of the city, who expressed their pity and sorrow for him most tenderly and compassionately: all hearts were not hard, all eyes were not dry. "There followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him," &c.

In this paragraph we have two parts, *viz.* the lamentation of the daughters of Jerusalem for Christ, and Christ's reply to them.

1. The lamentation of the daughters of Jerusalem for Christ. Concerning them, we briefly enquire who they were, and why they mourned.

(1.) Who they were? The text calls them "** daughters, i. e. inhabitants of Jerusalem; for it is a Hebraism; as daughters of Zion, daughters of Israel.*" And it is like the greatest part of them were women; and there were many of them, a troop of mourners, that followed Christ out of the city towards the place of his execution, with lamentations and wailings.

(2.) What the principle, or ground of these their lamentations was, is not agreed by those that have pondered the story. † Some are of opinion their tears and lamentations were but the effects and fruits of their more tender and ingenuous natures, which were

* *Θυγατρες Ιερουσαλημ i. e. mulieres Hierosolymitanæ: Hebraismus: sic filiaë Tsionis. Piscat. in loc.*

† Mr. Anthony Burgess, *Spiritual refining*, p. 120.

moved and melted with so tragical and sad a spectacle as was now before them. It is well observed by a *judicious author, "That the tragical story of some great and noble personage, full of heroic virtue and ingenuity (yet inhumanely and ungratefully used) will thus work upon ingenuous spirits who read or hear of it,—which when it reaches no higher, is so far from being faith, that it is but a carnal and fleshly devotion, springing from fancy, which is pleased with such a story and the principles of ingenuity stirred towards one, who is of a noble spirit, and yet abused. Such stories use to stir up a principle of humanity in men unto a compassionate love; which Christ himself at his suffering found fault with, as being not spiritual, nor raised enough in those women that went weeping to see the Messiah so handled. *Weep not for me*, (saith he) i. e. weep not so much for this, to see me so unworthily handled by those for whom I die." This is the principle from which some conceive those tears to flow.

But † Calvin attributes it to their faith, "looking upon these mourners as a remnant reserved by the Lord in that miserable dispersion; and though their faith was but weak, yet he judges it credible that there was a secret seed of godliness in them, which afterwards grew to a maturity, and brought forth fruit." And to the same sense others give their opinion also.

2. Let us consider Christ's reply to them; "weep not for me, ye daughters of Jerusalem," &c. Strange, that Christ should forbid them to weep for him, yea for him under such unparalleled sufferings and miseries. If ever there was a heart-melting object in the world, it was here. O who could hold, whose heart was not petrified, and more obdurate than the senseless rocks? This reply of Christ undergoes a double sense and interpretation, suitable to the different construction of their sorrows. Those that look upon their sorrows as merely natural, take Christ's reply in a negative sense, prohibiting such tears as those. They that expound their sorrows as the fruit of faith, tell us, though the form of Christ's expression be negative, yet the sense is comparative, as Mat. ix. 13. "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice," i. e. mercy rather than sacrifice. So here, weep rather upon your your own account, than mine; reserve your sorrows for the calamities coming upon yourselves and your children. You are greatly affected, I see, with the misery that is upon me; but mine will be quickly

* Dr. Thomas Goodwin, in his *Triumph of Faith*, p. 38.

† *Videmus quosdam non fuisse oblitos doctrinæ et miraculorum Christi. Sic in misera illa dissipatione exiguas sibi reliquias servavit Deus. Quamvis autem imbecilla fuit istarum mulierum fides, credibile tamen est, occultum fuisse pietatis semen, unde postea germen prodit.* Calvin.

over, yours will lie long. In which he shews his merciful and compassionate disposition, who was still more mindful of the troubles and burdens of others than of his own.

And indeed, the days of calamity coming upon them and their children were doleful days. What direful and unprecedented miseries befel them at the breaking up and devastation of the city, who hath not read or heard? And who can refrain from tears that hears or reads it?

Now, if we take the words in the first sense, as a prohibition of their merely natural and carnal affections, expressed in tears and lamentations for him, no otherwise than they would have been upon any other like tragical story; then the observation from it will be this,

Doct. 1. *That melting affections and sorrows, even from the sense and consideration of the sufferings of Christ, are no infallible signs of grace.*

If you take it in the latter sense, as the fruit of their faith, as tears flowing from a gracious principle; then the observation will be this,

Doct. 2. *That the believing meditation of what Christ suffered for us, is of great force and efficacy to melt and break the heart.*

I shall rather chuse to prosecute both these branches, than to decide the controversy; especially since the notes gathered from either may be useful to us. And therefore I shall begin with the first, viz.

Doct. 1. *That melting affections and sorrows, even from the sense of Christ's sufferings, are no infallible marks of grace.*

In this point I have two things to do, to prepare it for use.

First, To shew, what the melting of the affections by way of grief and sorrow is.

Secondly, That they may be so melted, even upon the account of Christ, and yet the heart remain unrenewed.

First, What the melting of the affections, by way of grief and sorrow, is.

Tears are nothing else but the juice of a mind oppressed, and squeezed with grief. Grief compresses the heart; the heart so compressed and squeezed, vents itself sometimes into tears, sighs, groans, &c. and this is two-fold: *gracious*, and wholly supernatural; or *common*, and altogether natural. The gracious melting or sorrow

of the soul, is likewise two-fold; *habitual* or *actual*. Habitual bodily sorrow is that gracious disposition, inclination, or tendency of the renewed heart to mourn and melt, when any just occasion is presented to the soul that calls for such sorrow. It is expressed, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. "By taking away the heart of stone, and giving "a heart of flesh;" i. e. a heart impressive, and yielding to such arguments and considerations as move it to mourning.

Actual sorrow is the expression and manifestation of that its inclination upon just occasions; and it is expressed two ways, either by the *internal* effects of it, which are the heaviness, shame, loathing, resolution, and holy revenge begotten in the soul upon the account of sin: or also by more *external* and visible effects, as sighs, groans, tears, &c. the former is essential to godly sorrow, the latter contingent and accidental, much depending upon the natural temperature and constitution of the body.

Natural and common meltings are nothing else but the effects of a better temper, and the fruit of a more ingenuous spirit, and easier constitution, which shews itself on any other, as well as upon spiritual occasions: as Austin said, he could weep plentifully when he read the story of Dido. The history of Christ is a very tragical and pathetic history, and may melt an ingenuous nature, where there is no renewed principles at all. So that,

Secondly, Our affections may be melted, even upon the score and account of Christ; and yet that is no infallible evidence of a gracious heart. And the reasons for it are,

1. Because we find all sorts of affections discovered by such as have been no better than temporary believers. The stony-ground hearers in Mat. xiii. 20. "received the word with joy;" and so did John's hearers also, who for "a season rejoiced in his light," John iii. 35. Now, if the affections of joy under the word may be exercised, why not of sorrow also? If the comfortable things revealed in the gospel may stir up the one, by a parity of reason, the sad things it reveals may answerably work upon the other. Even those Israelites whom Moses told they should fall by the sword, and not prosper, for the Lord would not be with them, because they were turned away from him; yet when Moses rehearsed the message of the Lord in their ears, they mourned greatly, Numb. xiv. 39. I know the Lord pardoned many of them their iniquities, though he took vengeance on their inventions; and yet it is as true, that with many of them God was not well-pleased, 1 Cor. x. 5. Many instances of their weeping and mourning before the Lord we find in this sacred history; and yet their hearts were not stedfast with God.

2. Because though the object about which our affections and passions are moved, may be spiritual; yet the motives and prin-

principles that set them on work, may be but carnal and natural ones. When I see a person affected in the hearing of the word, or prayer, even unto tears, I cannot presently conclude, surely this is the effect of grace; for it is possible, the pathetic quality of subject-matter, the rhetoric of the speaker, the very affecting tone, and modulation of the voice, may draw tears as well as faith working upon the spirituality, and deep concernment the soul hath in those things.

Whilst Austin was a Manichee, he sometimes heard Ambrose; and, saith he, "I was greatly affected in hearing him, even, unto 'tears many times.'" howbeit, it was not the heavenly nature of the subject, but the abilities and rare parts of the speaker that so affected him. And this was the case of Ezekiel's hearers, chap. xxxiii. 32.

Again, 3. These motions of the affections may rather be a fit and mood, than the very frame and temper of the soul. Now there is a vast difference betwixt these; there are times and seasons, when the roughest and most obdurate hearts may be pensive and tender*: but that is not its temper and frame, but only a fit, a pang, a transient passion. So the Lord complains of them, Hos. vi. 4. "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as 'the early dew, it goeth away.'" And so he complains, Psal. lxxviii. 34, 35, 36. "When he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned and enquired early after God. And they remembered that God was their rock, and the most high God their redeemer; nevertheless they did flatter him with their lips, and 'lied unto him with their tongues.'" For had this remembrance of God been the gracious temper of their souls, it would have continued with them; they would not have been thus wavering; thus hot and cold with God, as they were. Therefore we conclude, that we cannot infer a work of grace upon the heart, simply and merely from the meltings and thaws that are sometimes upon it. And hence, for your use, I shall infer, that,

Inference 1. If such as sometimes feel their hearts thawed and melted with the consideration of the sufferings of Christ, may yet be deceived; *What cause have they to fear and tremble, whose hearts are as unrelenting as the rocks, yielding to nothing that is proposed, or urged upon them?* How many such are there, of whom we may say, as Christ speaks of the inflexible Jews, "We have 'piped unto you, but ye have not danced; we have mourned unto 'you, but you have not lamented?'" Mat. xi. 17. They must in-

* *Ille tantum dicuntur inesse animæ, quæ insunt per modum quietis, i. e.* These things alone are said to be in the soul, which are in it habitually.

evitably come short of heaven, who come so short of those that do come short of heaven. If those perish that have rejoiced under the promises, and mourned under the threats of the word; what shall become of them that are as unconcerned, and untouched by what they hear, as the seats they sit on, or the dead that lie under their feet? Who are given up to such hardness of heart, that nothing can touch or affect them? One would think, the consideration of the *sixth chapter to the Hebrews* should startle such men and women, and make them cry out, Lord, what will become of such a senseless, stupid, dead creature as I am? If they that have been enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, may, notwithstanding such high raised affections as these, so fall away, that it shall be impossible to renew them again by repentance, what shall we then say, or think of his estate, to whom the most penetrating and awakening truths are no more than a tale that is told? The fire and hammer of the gospel can neither melt nor break them; they are iron and brass, Jer. vi. 28, 29.

Inference 2. If such as these may eternally miscarry; then *let all look carefully to their foundation, and see that they do not bless themselves in a thing of nought.* It is manifest from 1 Cor. x. 12. that many souls stand exceeding dangerously, who are yet strongly conceited of their own safety. And if you please to consult those scriptures in the margin*, you shall find vain confidence to be a ruling folly over the greatest part of men; and that which is the utter overthrow, and undoing of multitudes of professors.

Now there is nothing more apt to beget and breed this vain soul-undoing confidence, than the stirrings and meltings of our affections about spiritual things, whilst the heart remains unrenewed all the while. For (as a grave divine † hath well observed) such a man seems to have all that is required of a Christian, and herein to have attained the very end of all knowledge; which is operation and influence upon the heart and affections.

Indeed (thinks such a poor deluded soul) if I did hear, read, or pray, without any inward affections, with a dead, cold, and unconcerned heart; or if I did make a shew of zeal and affection in duties, and had it not, well might I suspect myself to be a self-cozening hypocrite; but it is not so with me, I feel my heart really melted many times, when I read the sufferings of Christ; I feel my heart raised and ravished with strange joys and comforts, when I hear the glory of heaven opened in the gospel: Indeed if

* Gal. vi. 3, 4. John viii. 54. Rom. ii. 18, 19, 21. Mat. xxv. 11, 12. Mat. vii. 22.

† Mr. Anthony Burgess.

it were not so with me, I might doubt the root of the matter is wanting; but if to my knowledge, affections be added; a melting heart joined with a knowing head, then I may be confident all is well. I have often heard ministers cautioning and warning their people not to rest satisfied with idle and unpractical notions in their understandings, but to labour for impressions upon their hearts; this I have attained, and therefore what danger of me? I have often heard it given as a mark of a hypocrite, that he hath light in his head, but it sheds not down its influence upon the heart: whereas in those that are sincere, it works on their heart and affections: So I find it with me, therefore I am in a most safe estate. O soul! of all the false signs of grace, none more dangerous than those that most resemble true ones; and never doth the devil more surely and incurably destroy, than when transformed into an angel of light. What if these meltings of thy heart be but a flower of nature? What if thou art more beholden to a good temper of body, than a gracious change of spirit for these things? Well, so it may be. Therefore be not secure, but fear, and watch. Possibly, if thou wouldest but search thine own heart in this matter, thou mayest find, that any other pathological, moving story, will have the like effects upon thee. Possibly too, thou mayest find, that, notwithstanding all thy raptures and joys at the hearing of heaven, and its glory, yet after that pang is over, thy heart is habitually earthly, and thy conversation is not there. For all thou canst mourn at the relations of Christ's sufferings, thou art not so affected with sin, that was the meritorious cause of the sufferings of Christ, as to crucify one corruption, or deny the next temptation, or part with any way of sin that is gainful, or pleasurable to thee for his sake.

Why now, reader, if it be so with thee, what art thou the better for the fluency of thy affections? Dost thou think in earnest, that Christ hath the better thoughts of thee, because thou canst shed tears for him, when notwithstanding thou every day piercest and woundest him? O! be not deceived. Nay, for ought I know, thou mayest find, upon a narrow search, that thou puttest thy tears in the room of Christ's blood, and givest the confidence and dependence of thy soul to them; and if so, they shall never do thee any good.

O therefore search thy heart, reader be not too confident: take not up too easily upon such poor weak grounds as these, a soul-undoing confidence. Always remember the wheat and tares resemble each other in their first springing up; that an egg is not liker to an egg, than hypocrisy, in some shapes and forms into which it can cast itself, is like a genuine work of grace. O remember that among the ten virgins, that is, the reformed professors of religion

that have cast off and separated themselves from the worship and defilements of Antichrist, five of them were foolish.

There be first, that shall be last; and last, that shall be first, Mat. xix. 30. Great is the deceitfulness of our hearts, Jer. xvii. 9. And many are the subtleties and devices of Satan, 2 Cor. xi. 3. Many also are the astonishing examples of self-deceiving souls recorded in the word. Remember what you lately read of Judas. Great also will be the exactness of the last judgment. And how confident soever you be, that you shall speed well in that day, yet still remember that trial is not yet past. Your final sentence is not yet come from the mouth of your Judge. This I speak not to affright and trouble, but excite and warn you. The loss of a soul is no small loss, and, upon such grounds as these, they are every day cast away.

This may suffice to be spoken to the first observation, built on this supposition, that it was but a pang of mere natural affection in them. But if it were the effect of a better principle, the fruit of their faith, as some judge; then I told you, the observation from it would be this,

Doct. That the believing meditation of what Christ suffered for us, is of great force and efficacy to melt and break the heart.

It is promised, Zech. xii. 10. that "they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born." Ponder seriously, here, the *spring* and *motive*, *They shall look upon me*; it is the eye of faith that melts and breaks the heart. The *effect* of such a sight of Christ; they shall look and *mourn*; be in bitterness and sorrow. True repentance is a drop out of the eye of faith; and the measure or degree of that sorrow caused by a believing view of Christ. To express which, two of the fullest instances of grief we read of, are borrowed; that of a tender father, mourning over a dear and only son; that of the people of Israel, mourning over Josiah, that peerless prince, in the valley of Megiddo.

Now to shew you how the believing meditation of Christ, and his sufferings, come kindly and savingly to break and melt down the gracious heart, I shall propound these four considerations of the heart-breaking efficacy of faith, eyeing a crucified Jesus.

First, The very *realizing* of Christ and his sufferings by faith, is a most affecting and melting thing. Faith is a true glass that represents all those his sufferings and agonies to the life. It presents them not as a fiction, or idle tale, but as a true and faithful narrative. This (saith faith) is a true and faithful saying, that Christ

was not only clothed in our flesh; even he that is over all, God blessed for ever, the only Lord, the Prince of the kings of the earth, became a man; but it is also most certain, that in this body of his flesh, he grappled with the infinite wrath of God, which filled his soul with horror and amazement; that the Lord of life did hang dead upon the tree; that he went as a lamb to the slaughter, and was as a sheep dumb before the shearer; that he endured all this, and more than any finite understanding can comprehend, in my room and stead; for my sake he there groaned and bled; for my pride, earthliness, lust, unbelief, hardness of heart, he endured all this. I say, to realize the sufferings of Christ thus, is of great power to affect the coldest, dullest heart. You cannot imagine the difference there is in presenting things as realities, with convincing and satisfying evidences, and our looking on them as a fiction or uncertainty.

Secondly, But faith can apply as well as realize; and if it do so, it must needs overcome the heart.

Ah! Christian, canst thou look upon Jesus as standing in thy room, to bear the wrath of a Deity for thee? Canst thou think on it, and not melt? That when thou, like Isaac, wast bound to the altar, to be offered up to justice, Christ, like the ram, was caught in the thicket, and offered in thy room. When thy sins had raised a fearful tempest, that threatened every moment to entomb thee in a sea of wrath, Jesus Christ was thrown over to appease that storm! Say, reader, can thy heart dwell one hour upon such a subject as this? Canst thou with faith, present Christ to thyself, as he was taken down from the cross, drenched in his own blood, and say, These were the wounds that he received for me; this is he that loved me, and gave himself for me: out of these wounds comes that balm that heals my soul; out of these stripes my peace: When he hanged upon the cross, he bore my name upon his breast, like the high priest. It was love, pure love, strong love to my poor soul; to the soul of an enemy that drew him down from heaven, and all the glory he had there, to endure these sorrows in soul and body for me.

O you cannot hold up your hearts long to the piercing thoughts of this, but your bowels will be pained, and, like Joseph, you will seek a place to vent your hearts in.

Thirdly, Faith cannot only realize and apply Christ, and his death, but it can reason and conclude such things from his death, as will fill the soul with affection to him, and break the heart in pieces, in his presence. When it views Christ as dead, it infers, Is Christ dead for me? then was I dead in law, sentenced and condemned to die eternally; 2 Cor. v. 14. "If one died for all, then were all dead." How woeful was my case when the law

had passed sentence on me? I could not be sure when I lay down, but that it might be executed before I rose; nothing but a puff of breath betwixt my soul and hell.

Again, Is Christ dead for me? then I shall never die. If he be condemned, I am acquitted. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, it is Christ that died," Rom. viii. 34. My soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler; I was condemned, but am now cleared; I was dead, but am now alive; O the unsearchable riches of Christ! O love past finding out!

Again, Did God give up Christ to such miseries and sufferings for me? * How shall he with-hold any thing from me? He that "spared not his own Son, will doubtless with him freely give me "all things," Rom. viii. 32. Now I may rest upon him for pardon, peace, acceptance, and glory for my soul. Now I may rely upon him safely for provision, protection, and all supplies for my body. Christ is the root of these mercies; he is more than all these, he is nearer and dearer to God than any other gift. O what a blessed, happy, comfortable state hath he now brought my soul into!

To conclude, Did Christ endure all these things for me? then it is past doubt, he will never leave nor forsake me: It cannot be that after he has endured all this, he will cast off the souls for whom he endured it. Here the soul is evangelically broken, considering the mercies that emerge and flow to it out of the sea of Christ's blood.

Fourthly, and lastly, Faith can not only realize, apply, and infer, but it can also compare the love of Christ in all this, both with his dealings with others, and with the soul's dealing with Christ, who loved it. To compare Christ's dealings with others, is most affecting: he hath not dealt with every one, as with me; nay, few there are that can speak of such mercies as I have from him. How many are there that have no part nor portion in his blood? Who must bear that wrath in their own persons, that he bare himself for me! He espied me out, and singled me forth to be the object of his love, leaving thousands and millions still unreconciled; not that I was better than they, for I was the greatest of sinners, far from righteousness, as unlikely as any to be the object of such grace and love: my companions in sin are left, and I am taken. Now the soul is full, the heart grows big, too big to contain itself.

Yea, faith helps the soul to compare the love of Christ to it, with

* He who sent his Son, hath sent down the Spirit, and promised his favour; Is there any thing so great that he will refuse? *Prosp.*

the returns it hath made to him for that love. And what, my soul! hath thy carriage to Christ been, since this grace that wants a name, appeared to thee? Hast thou returned love for love? Love suitable to such love? Hast thou prized, valued, and esteemed this Christ, according to his own worth in himself, or his kindness to thee? Ah no, I have grieved, pierced, wounded his heart a thousand times since that, by my ingratitude; I have suffered every trifle to jostle him out of my heart? I have neglected him a thousand times, and made him say, Is this thy kindness to thy friend? Is this the reward I shall have for all that I have done, and suffered for thee? Wretch that I am, how have I requited the Lord! This shames, humbles and breaks the heart.

And when from such sights of faith, and considerations as these, the heart is thus affected, it affords a good argument, indeed, that thou art gone beyond all the attainments of temporary believers? flesh and blood hath not revealed this.

Inference 1. Have the believing meditations of Christ, and his sufferings, such heart-melting influences? *Then sure there is but little faith among men.* Our dry eyes and hard hearts are evidences against us, that we are strangers to the sights of faith.

God be merciful to the hardness of your hearts. How is Christ and his love slighted among men! How shallow doth his blood run to some eyes? O that my head were waters, and mine eyes fountains of tears for this! What monsters are carnal hearts? We are as if God had made us without affections, as if all ingenuity and tenderness were dried up. Our ears are so accustomed to the sounds of Christ, and his blood, that now they are become as common things. If a child die, we can mourn over our dead; but who mourns for Christ as for an only son? We may say of faith, when men and women sit so unaffected under the gospel, as Martha said of Christ concerning her brother Lazarus, If thou (precious faith) hadst been here, so many hearts had not been dead this day, and in this duty. Faith is that burning-glass which contracts the beams of the grace, and love, and wisdom, and power of Jesus Christ together, reflects these on the heart, and makes it burn; but without it, we feel nothing savingly.

Inf. 2. Have the believing meditations of Christ, and his sufferings, such heart-melting influences? *Then surely the proper order of raising the affections, is to begin at the exercise of faith.* It grieves me to see how many poor Christians strive with their own dead hearts, endeavouring to raise and affect them, but cannot; they complain and strive, strive and complain, but can discover no love to the Lord, no brokenness of heart; they go to this ordinance and that, to one duty and another, hoping that now the Lord will affect it, and fill the sails; but come back disappointed and

ashamed, like the troops of Tema. Poor Christian, hear me one word; possibly it may do thy business, and stand thee in more stead, than all the methods thou hast yet used. If thou wouldst indeed get a heart evangelically melted for sin, and broken with the kindly sense of the grace and love of Christ, thy way is not to force thy affections, nor to vex thyself, and go about complaining of a hard heart, but set thyself to believe, realize, apply, infer, and compare by faith as you have been directed; and see what this will do: "They shall look on me whom they have pierced, and mourn." This is the way and proper method to raise the heart, and break it.

Inf. 3. Is this the way to get a truly broken heart? *Then let those that have attained brokenness of heart this way, bless the Lord whilst they live, for so choice a mercy; and that upon a double account.*

1. For as much as a heart so affected and melted, is not attainable by any natural or unrenewed person; if they would give all they have in the world, it cannot purchase one such tear, or groan over Christ; mark, what characters of special grace it bears, in the description that is made of it, in that forementioned place, Zech. xii. 10. Such a frame as this is not born with us, or to be acquired by us; for it is there said to be poured out by the Lord upon us, "I will pour upon them," &c. There is no hypocrisy or dissimulation in these mournings, they being compared to the mourning of a man for his only son: and sure parents hearts are not untouched when they behold such sights.

Nature is not the principle of it, but faith; for it is there said, they shall look on me; i. e. believe and mourn. *Self* is not the end and centre of these sorrows; it is not so much for damning ourselves, as for piercing Christ: "They shall look on me whom they have pierced, and shall mourn;" so that this is sorrow after God, and not a flash of nature, as discoursed in the former point. Therefore you have cause to bless the Lord, whilst you live for such a special mercy as this is. And,

2. As it is the right, so it is the choicest, and most precious gift that can be given you; for it is ranked among the prime mercies of the new covenant, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. This shall be the covenant; "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." What wouldest thou have given sometimes for such a heart as now thou hast, though it be not yet as thou wouldest have it? And however you value and esteem it, God himself sets no common value on it: for mark what he saith of it, Psal. li. 17. "The sacrifices of God are a broken heart: a broken and a contrite spirit. O God, thou wilt

“not despise;” i. e. God is more delighted with such a heart, than with all the sacrifices in the world; one groan, one tear, flowing from faith, and the spirit of adoption, are more to him, than the cattle upon a thousand hills. And to the same sense he speaks again, Isa. lxvi. 1, 2. “Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is “my throne, and the earth is my footstool: Where is the house “that ye build to me? And where is the place of my rest?—But “to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a con- “trite spirit, and trembleth at my word;” q. d. All the magnificent temples and glorious structures in the world, give me no pleasure in comparison of such a broken heart as this.

O then, for ever bless the Lord, that hath done that for you, which none else could do, and which he has done but for few besides you.

SERMON XXVI.

Of the Nature and Quality of CHRIST'S Death.

ACTS ii. 23.

Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified, and slain.

HAVING considered, in order, the preparative acts for the death of Christ, both on his own part, and on his enemies part, we now come to consider the * death of Christ itself, which was the principal part of his humiliation, and is the chief pillar of our consolation. Here we shall in order consider,

First, The kind and nature of the death he died.

Secondly, The manner in which he bare it, viz. patiently, solitarily, and instructively; dropping divers holy and instructive lessons upon all that were about him, in his seven last words upon the cross.

Thirdly, The funeral solemnities at his burial.

Fourthly, and lastly, The weighty ends and great designs of his death. In all which particulars, as we proceed to discuss and open them, you will have an account of the deep debasement and humiliation of the Son of God.

In this text, we have an account of the kind and nature of that

* The death of Christ was the last step of his humiliation; by which he underwent the most grievous, the most dreadful, and the greatest punishment for the sins of men. *Ames.*