

poor penitent believer is received into God's family, and enjoys all the privileges thereof, and in time shall be admitted into his immediate presence. Now this seeking reconciliation with God is not a thing to be once done at our first acquaintance with him, and no more; no, but you must be daily renewing and keeping afoot this friendship, by godly sorrow for sin, and a lively faith in the mediator. Repentance and faith must be still renewed, that all breaches between God and us may be prevented.

2. Every day we must labour more to deck and adorn the soul with the graces of God's Spirit, for these make us lovely in the eyes of God: Eph. iv. 24, 'Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.' When the soul is clothed and adorned with these spiritual qualities of righteousness and holiness, then it is like God; these are ornaments and garments which never fade and wax old. The Lord delighteth in his own image in us.

3. That we should honour God in the world by a holy conversation. His people that are reconciled to him, God will not take them into his immediate presence by and by; as Absalom, 2 Sam. xiv. 24, 'The king said, Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face', &c. That his people may be exercised and tried, that hope may set them a-longing, and that God may have glory from the heirs of heaven here on earth in their conversation: Mat. v. 16, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.'

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## SERMON VI.

*For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened, not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.*—2 COR. v. 4.

IN these words the apostle still persists in explaining the nature of that groaning and desiring after the heavenly estate which is in the saints, by declaring the reasons and ends of it. They do not desire simply death itself, which is a fruit of sin, but that happy change, not altogether out of a wearisomeness of this life, but out of a sense of a better. In the words observe—1. The time when we groan—*For we that are in this tabernacle groan.* 2. The occasion of groaning—*Being burdened.* 3. The end of groaning, expressed, (1.) Negatively—*Not that we would be unclothed.* (2.) Positively, expressed, (1st.) Metaphorically—*But clothed upon;* (2dly.) Literally—*That mortality might be swallowed up of life.*

Let me explain these clauses.

I. The time when we groan—'We that are in this tabernacle;' that is, while we are in these bodies of clay.

II. The occasion—'Being burdened,' *scil.*, with sin and afflictions. We have many pressures upon us which are very grievous, and give us a great weariness.

III. The end.

1. Negatively expressed—'Not for that we would be unclothed.' Those who interpret the apostle to speak of the change of the living at Christ's coming, say the meaning is, we would not at all put off the body, as others do at death. But this conceit I have already disproved. The words, therefore, may have a threefold sense—[1.] With respect to the ground of this desire; not that we would part with the body out of impatience. There is a double groaning; one of nature, another of grace. (1.) Of nature, out of a bare sense of present miseries. [2.] Another of grace, out of a confidence and earnest desire of eternal life, which the Spirit kindleth in us. And so the sense will be—as weary as we are, yet we are not so weary as if for afflictions' sake we would part with the body, wherein we may be serviceable to Christ, and enjoy something of him. No, this groaning arises not so much from a weariness of life natural, as from the hope of a better life. For therefore he saith, Though they were burdened and grieved in the body, yet they did not desire to be unclothed of the body. (2.) The manner. They did not simply desire to be unclothed, but only in some respect, that they might be clothed upon with a better life. It is natural to all living creatures to desire the continuance of that being which they have—'No man ever yet hated his own flesh.' Therefore the saints do not simply desire to be unclothed, but do as all men do, naturally shun death. But the natural horror of death is in a good measure overcome by the confidence of a better estate; and therefore desire not to be unclothed, but to be clothed upon, as we would put off an old torn garment for a new and a better. [3.] They did not desire to part with these bodies so as to part with them finally, as if they were altogether incapable of this immortality. The soul loveth the body, and would not part with the body but upon necessity, and that for a while only; but being corruptible, they would not lose the substance, but the corruptibility. There is another sort of body, and another sort of life, infinitely more desirable than this, an eternal, immutable state of life. This we pant, desire, and groan after, and from this we would not have the body excluded; that is, we would not wholly and everlastingly be deprived of the body which now we bear about with us. And so the state of the case lieth thus: if we lived in a house which were our own, where the walls are decayed, and the roof ready to drop down upon our heads, we would desire to remove and depart for a while, but would not lose the ground and the materials, but have it built up into a better frame. So, not another body, but we would have it otherwise.

2. Positively. So it is doubly expressed—(1.) Metaphorically; (2.) Literally.

[1.] Metaphorically. And so those that interpret the words of those which remain at Christ's coming think the expression favoureth their opinion, because it is not said *clothed*, but *clothed upon*, keeping the body still, without being divested of it. But the compound word is not always emphatical, and signifieth no more than the simple verb: 1 Cor. xv. 53, 'Then this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality;' ἐπενδύσασθαι and ἐνδύσασθαι are the same, putting on, or being clothed upon. Well then, we desire to be clothed upon. What is that? with heavenly glory. (1.) In soul, presently after death. The very getting into heaven, and the glory

wherewith we shall be encompassed there, is a clothing upon. *Quos circumfusum vestit pro tegmine lumen.* (2.) In body, when it shall be restored to us at the last day, and likened to Christ's glorious body, Phil. iii. 21.

[2.] Literally expressed—'That mortality might be swallowed up of life.' The patrons of the former disallowed opinion here challenge again the phrase as full for them as if the meaning were that that which is mortal should be swallowed up of life, without the pain or necessity of death. But the true meaning is that our *τὸ θνητὸν*, our mortal, that the mortality wherewith the body is now burdened, and remaineth on it in the grave, may be wholly taken away by the blessed immortality which Christ shall then bestow upon us; when he shall raise us up at the last day our mortality must be gone, for 'flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor corruption inherit incorruption,' 1 Cor. xv. 50. That which is corruptible in our nature must perish, but the body must not perish. Well then, that which the saints desire is that their animal and corporeal life may be changed into a heavenly and everlasting. And we do not groan that we may want the body, but that the mortality of it may be done away, that it may be freed from that corruption and mortality to which it is now subject, the substance still remaining.

I shall a little insist on these propositions—

1. That whilst we live in this earthly and mortal body we are burdened with a heavy load of sin and afflictions.

2. That the saints, being burdened, do in a holy manner groan, and long for a better estate.

3. That in that better estate mortality is swallowed up of life.

4. That in that life we shall be clothed again with our bodies in due time, and our bodies with everlasting glory.

*First,* The first proposition is liable to sense. There needeth no Bible or scripture to tell us that our present state is afflicted and filled with sorrows; our flesh feeleth it, and we know to our grief that here is little else but disquiet and vexation; and daily sad experience informeth us of the indwelling of sin, and the frequent out-breakings of it. To prove this were to light a candle to daylight, and to waste your time impertinently. But I shall do two things—1. Show you why afflictions and sins are such a heavy burden to the children of God; 2. How foolish and stupid we are, that we do so little mind and improve this.

1. Why affliction is a burden.

[1.] Afflictions are so, partly because the children of God have not yet divested themselves of the interests and concernments of flesh and blood. They are *ὁμοιοπαθεῖς*, of like passions with others. They love their natural comforts as others do, and human nature is the same thing in them that it is in others: Job vi. 12, 'Is my strength the strength of stones, or is my flesh brass?' They are made of flesh and blood as well as others, and feel pain as well as others. Grace doth not destroy the feelings of nature; Jesus Christ, as man, had his fears, and tears, and strong cries, Heb. v. 7. He felt his burden, and said, 'My soul is heavy unto death,' Mat. xxvi. 38. And therefore we cannot expect they should be in an utter dedolency, feel pain and trouble, and forbear complaining. Partly too, because grace intendereth the

heart, and maketh them in some sort more sensible of afflictions than others are, because they look upon them as coming from God, and the fruit of sin, and they dare not slight any of God's corrective dispensations. There are two extremes—slighting and fainting, Heb. xii. 5. Affliction cannot be improved if we have not a sense of it, to show so much reverence to God as to tremble at his anger, Num. xii. 14. When he crosseth and disappointed us, it must not be slightly passed over. When the windows of heaven were opened from above, and the fountains of the deep broken open from below, then the flood was increased, Gen. vii. 11. So when nature and grace concurrerth to heighten the affliction, the children of God must needs have a greater and more tender sense of it than others have. As a delicate constitution is more capable of pain than a robustious and stubborn one, and the tender flesh of a child will sooner feel the lash than the thick skin of a slave; so the children of God, having a more serious apprehension of things, and a more tender spirit, soonest feel the burden of their Father's displeasure, and do more lay it to heart than careless and stupid spirits, who laugh at their cross, or drink away their sorrows. Partly, too, because they are more exercised with afflictions. The world hateth them because they are so good, and God chasteneth them because they are no better: Ps. xxxiv. 11, 'Many are the troubles of the righteous.' There is more squaring and hewing and backing used about a stone that is to be set in a stately palace, than that which is placed in an ordinary building; and the vine is pruned when the bramble is not looked after, but let alone to grow to its full length. And the child of the family is put under discipline, whilst a bastard or a servant liveth more at large. God meaneth to destroy those whom by a just judgment he permitteth to go on in their sins to their own eternal undoing; Heb. xii. 8. Blessed be God that he taketh more care of us, and, when we need it, correcteth us seasonably as children; so that in this earthly and mortal body we are burthened with an heavy load of afflictions.

[2.] Why sin is a burthen to the children of God. Ps. xxxviii. 4, 'Mine iniquities are gone over my head; as a heavy burthen they are too heavy for me:' Ps. xl. 12, 'Mine iniquities have taken hold of me, that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head; my heart faileth me.' The burthen is heavy, and the creature weak; and therefore they groan. Now sins are not only a burthen to a wounded conscience, but to a tender conscience, even the relics of corruption. Go to a wounded conscience, and they will tell you that better a millstone had fallen upon them, than one spark of God's wrath for sin should light upon the conscience. But we speak now of a tender conscience, and are to show you why sin is such a heavy burthen to the children of God.

(1.) Because they have more light than others, and see more into the nature and evil of sin—'After I was instructed, I smote upon the thigh,' Jer. xxxi. 18; and Rom. vii. 9, 'The commandment came, sin revived, and I died.' As conviction breaketh in upon the soul, so the more troubled with sin. Ignorant men know not their danger, nor the heinousness of their faults.

(2.) Because they have more love to God than others have. And

they that love much will mourn most for sin ; as the woman that had much forgiven loved much, Luke vii. 47 ; and because she loved much she wept much. Many times God's children, the more holy they are, the more troubled about sin than ever before. What is the reason ? It is not from the increase of sin, but the increase of light and love ; they see more sin, and more into sin, than they did before, and are more affected with it ; as in a glass of pure water the least mote may be espied.

(3.) They have more heartily renounced sin than others. Their hearts are set against it, and therefore the relics of it are a greater burthen to them. *Elementa non gravitant in suis locis*, as water not in its place ; but when the heart is set against it, then the least remainders are a burthen to them ; this is that they pray and strive against. Wicked men are in their element, they ' make a mock of sin ; it is a sport to them to do evil.' What I hate is my burthen ; ' O wretched man,' &c. Rom. vii. 24.

(4.) They hope for a better estate than others do, to be perfectly freed from sin, 1 John iii. 3. It is a grief to them they cannot find it while they are in the body. Here, as hair cut will grow again as long as the roots remain, or ivy in the wall, cut boughs, stump, branches, yet some strings there are that will ever sprout out again.

2. This shows our stupid folly, that we do no more mind and improve this ; that still we are so loth to leave this woful life, and prepare for a better estate. God driveth us out of the world, as he did Lot out of Sodom ; but yet we are loth to depart, as if it were better to be miserable apart from Christ than happy with him. Have we not yet smarted enough for our love to a vain world ? nor sinned enough to make us weary of our abode here ? But yet we linger and draw back, as if we would sin more and longer. Surely this miserable, tempting, sinful world is an unmeet place to be the home and happiness of God's children. In this valley of tears and place of snares, what should we do but long and sigh for home ? Here sin liveth with men from the birth to the grave ; we complain of sin, and yet are loth to be rid of it ; we cry out of the vanity and vexation of the world, and yet set our hearts upon it, and love it better than God and the world to come. The thoughts of our transmigration are very grievous to us. If you cannot go so high as groaning and desiring earnestly, yet where is serious waiting and diligent preparing, drawing home as fast as we can ? Alas ! we are serving our covetousness and pride and lusts, and tiring ourselves in making provision for our fleshly appetites and wills, as if we were to tarry here for ever. We take it for granted they have not thought to remove to another place that do not make provision before they come thither. But alas ! we must remove whether we will or no ; and shall we, like foolish birds, build our nests here with such art and contrivance, when to-morrow we must be gone ?

*Secondly*, The second proposition, That the saints, being burthened, do in a holy manner groan, and long for a better life.

1. The apostle here explaineth their groaning, and showeth that it is not to be unclodeth, but clothed upon. Therefore—

[1.] It is not an unnatural desire, as if we did desire death as death. No, a creature cannot desire its own deprivation ; therefore the apostle

saith it is not to be unclothed, &c. Jesus Christ, before he manifested his submission, did first manifest the innocent desires of nature—‘Father, if it be possible, let the cup pass from me.’ &c. The separation of the soul from the body, and the body’s remaining under corruption, is in itself evil, and the fruit of sin, Rom. v. 12. Grace is not given us to reconcile us to corruption, or to make death as death seem desirable, or to cross the inclinations of innocent nature. But yet heaven, and eternal happiness beyond it, is still matter of desire to us. Death is God’s threatening, and we are not threatened with benefits, but evils; and evils of punishment are not to be desired barely for themselves, but submitted unto for a higher end. Nature abhorreth and feareth death, but yet grace desireth glory: the soul is loth to part with the body, but yet it is far lother to miss Christ, and to be without him; as a man is loth to lose a leg, or an arm, yet to preserve the whole body is willing. In short, the soul is bound to the body with a double bond, one natural, and the other voluntary, by love and affection, desiring and seeking its welfare. The voluntary bond is governed and ordered by religion till the natural bond be loosed, either in the ordinary course of nature, or at the will of God.

[2.] It is not a discontented desire, arising out of an impatience of the cross, or desperation under our difficulties and troubles. No; believers lament their present misery by reason of sin, and the evils which proceed thence. They have a sense and feeling of them as well as others have, yet they do not desire death out of impatience to be freed from so many troubles and vexations, but it is that blessed estate and perfect deliverance which they expect in the world to come; like men in a tempest, that would be set ashore as soon as they can. The carnal groan out of discontent; but the groans of the faithful are that they cannot enjoy true and perfect blessedness, nor be without sin. To give you some instances of groans out of discontent; the murmuring Israelites: Exod. xvi. 3, ‘Would to God we had died in Egypt.’ It is usual in a pet for men to wish themselves in their graves; but alas! they do not consider what it is to be in the state of the dead, and to come unprepared into the other world. Yea, the children of God may have their fits of impatience and discontent; but they are not the desires and groanings here mentioned; as Job iii. 20, 21, ‘Wherefore is life given to him that is in misery, and light to the bitter in soul? which long for death, but it cometh not; which dig for it more than for hid treasures.’ No, these discontented fits are far different from the holy desires and groans of the saints. These are but a shameful retreat from the conflict and difficulties of the present life, or irksomeness under the burden thereof, or despondency and distrust of God’s help, rather than any sanctified resolution.

2. Let us see the holiness of these groans and desires. (1.) They come from a certain confidence, ver. 1 of this chapter; not a bare conjecture, but a certain knowledge. Surely heaven and glory is amiable, and the object of our desires; and when we are persuaded of the truth and worth of it, we will groan and long after it. (2.) A serious preparation: ver. 3, ‘If so be that being clothed, we shall not be found naked.’ They have made up their accounts between God and their souls, sued out their pardon; stand with their loins girt, and

lamps burning ; as Simeon—‘ Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,’ &c., when he had seen Christ with the eyes of his faith as well as of his body. (3.) A heart deadened to the world ; for, in the text : ‘ Being burthened, we groan.’ Till we are weaned from present felicities, we shall not earnestly seek after better. The child of God is now in his exile and pilgrimage, and therefore longeth to be at home in his own country. He is now in his conflict and warfare, then crowned ; now, under his trial, then he hath his recompense. He seeth the vanity and emptiness of the things of this life, and also, by the eye of faith, the excellency and glory of the life to come. (4.) From a just value and esteem of that better life. For here he compareth the one with the other, and showeth the preference of the one before the other to be the true reason of the saints’ groaning. Comparing the emptiness of things below with the fulness of things above, the baseness of earthly things with the glory of heavenly things, the miseries of this life with the happiness of that life, make them willing of the exchange, only they reserve the good pleasure of God. If God hath no more work for them to do, they are ready. A christian liveth and dieth at the Lord’s will and pleasure. For he hath resigned himself to him—Lord, if I have done my work, if I may no longer be necessary to thy people, I am willing and ready. Well then, you see how these desires and groans of the saints are to be understood : they do not simply desire death, but desire glory ; not to be unclothed, but clothed. They submit to death when the time is come, and God hath no more work for them to do in the world ; yea, they are glad of it ; as Jacob’s spirit revived when he saw the waggons which Joseph sent to carry him into Egypt. Death is the chariot to carry you to Christ, and therefore it should not be unwelcome to us. Christ was willing to come down to us, though it were to meet with shame and pain ; why should we be so loth to return to him ?

*Thirdly*, The third point is, that in the other world ‘ mortality is swallowed up of life.’

1. To open the meaning of this expression, ‘ swallowed up.’ It is not swallowed up as a gulf or fire swalloweth up that which is cast into it ; no, but as Theodoret well expresseth it, as darkness is swallowed up by light, or as perfection swalloweth up imperfection, or as the rude draught is swallowed up by the perfecting of the picture, as childhood by manhood, &c. Such a perfective alteration is there of our state.

2. To show you what kind of life this is. (1.) It is an eternal life ; there you live, and never die ; you need not be perplexed with any thoughts and fears of change ; the soul shall no more flit out of the body, and the body itself shall remain in an eternal spring of youth. There was a way out of our earthly paradise, but none, that ever we could find, in again. But in our eternal paradise there is a way in, but no way out again : Luke xvi. 26, ‘ They that would pass from hence to you cannot.’ Upon supposal they would, they cannot. God’s grant will never be reversed. (2.) This life is life indeed, for it is a blessed life, always spent in the presence of God, the fountain of all blessedness ; and we ever love him, and are ever beloved by him 1 Thes. iv. 17. Not an hour nor a minute absent from God, praising

and lauding him for evermore. (3.) This life is a glorious life. The sight is glorious; there we shall see God face to face, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. The place is glorious, 2 Cor. xii. 4, the upper paradise. The company is glorious, all the glorified saints and angels, Heb. xii. 22, 23. Our souls and bodies glorious, Phil. iii. 21. Our daily exercise shall be glorious; for we shall always praise God without any vain thoughts, or distraction, or worldly encumbrances, or weariness of the flesh. (4.) It is a joyful life—'Enter into thy master's joy,' Mat. xxv. 21; and Ps. xvi. 11, 'Thou wilt show me thy path of life; in thy presence there is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand pleasures for evermore.' The pleasures of the world are poor, empty things, suddenly pass away as a dream; but these remain for ever, and are full and unmixed. There is continual matter of rejoicing, none of sorrow. (5.) It is a most holy, pure, and perfect life. The body shall be united to a soul fully sanctified, from which it shall never again be separated, and both together shall be the eternal temple of the Holy Ghost; and the whole man shall be firmly established in righteousness and holiness, never to sin, never to be in danger to sin again. Well then, we learn two things hence.

First, That when a christian dieth, he is not extinguished; he is but unclothed, and his mortality is swallowed up of life. That which we call death is but a dissolution, not a destruction; a separating of the soul from the body for a while: neither soul nor body is annihilated. It is a journey to a better world, called also a sleep in scripture. The death of the beasts is not called a sleep. Your flesh resteth in hope, Ps. xvi. 10. While the soul enjoyeth God, Christ is the guardian of your dust, and must see it forthcoming at the last day, which is a comfort to us in a dying hour. A christian can see life in death; when his friends about him are waiting for the last gasp, he is waiting for eternity; when they are crying out, Oh, he dieth! yet he can say, Yet I know that my Redeemer liveth, and with these eyes shall I see him at the last day.

Secondly, It may quicken us to a contempt of this life, and a desire of that which is eternal. Mortality is the disgrace of all sublunary comforts; and the present life is of little value, were it not for the reference it hath to God and eternity, because we must soon lay it down. But then we shall be for ever with our Saviour, and behold his glory; enjoy the clear vision of God, and be ravished with his beauty, and be filled with eternal joy and delights, and be secure of our eternal blessedness; all tears shall be wiped from our faces, and we shall never sorrow any more. No evil that can be feared shall come near us; all good shall abound there; the light of God's eternal favour shall shine upon us in its full strength, and the streams of eternal goodness shall ever flow from God and the Lamb. These things we believe now, but the enjoyment will exceed all that man can conceive.

*Fourthly,* The fourth proposition is—

That in this life we shall be clothed again with our bodies, and our bodies with everlasting glory.

For therefore the saints would not be wholly unclothed, but clothed upon. And the expression of mortality being swallowed up of life doth mainly concern the body, that is, our *τὸ θνητὸν*; the soul is an



immortal being. Now the reasons are these—(1.) The man cannot be completely happy till the body be raised again. The soul alone doth not constitute human nature, or that being which may be called man. The body doth essentially concur to the constitution of man, as well as the soul. Therefore the soul, though it be a spirit, and can live apart, yet it was not made to live apart for ever, but to live in the body, and so remaineth a widow, as it were, till the body be raised up and united to it. It is without its mate and companion, so that it remaineth destitute of half itself, which, though it may be borne for a while, yet not for ever. (2.) It is agreeable to the wisdom, justice, and goodness of God that the body which had its share in the work should have its share in the reward. It is the body which is most gratified in sin, and the body which is most pained in obedience. What is it that was wearied and tired, and endured all the labours and troubles of christianity? Therefore the body, that is the soul's sister and co-heir, is to share with it in its eternal estate, whatsoever it be; before that, the wicked are but in part punished, and the godly in part rewarded. There is a time when God will deal with the whole man. (3.) The state of those that die will not be worse than the state of those that are only changed at Christ's coming. The bodies are not destroyed, but perfected; the substance is preserved, only ended with new qualities. Now there would be a disparity among the glorified if some should have their bodies, others not. (4.) In the heavenly estate there are many objects which can only be discerned by our bodily senses: the human nature of Christ, the beauty of the heavenly place, or mansion of the blessed, with other works of God, which certainly are offered to our contemplation. Now if God find objects, he will find faculties. How shall we see those things which are to be seen, hear those things which are to be heard, unless we have bodies and bodily senses? (5.) As Christ was taken into heaven, so we; for we shall bear the image of the heavenly. He carried no other flesh into heaven but what he assumed from the Virgin; that very body which was carried in her womb, which was laid down as a sacrifice for sin,—that very body was carried into heaven, Phil. iii. 21. The body that is subject to so many infirmities, that is harassed and worn out with labours, exposed to such pains and sufferings, even that body shall be like Christ's glorious body, 1 Cor. xv. 43, 44. It shall not be decayed with age, nor wasted with sickness, nor need the supplies of meat and drink, nor be subject to pains and aches, &c. Well then, let us serve God faithfully; 1 Cor. xv. 58, 'Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.'

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