

A FUNERAL SERMON.

EDITORIAL NOTE.

THE following sermon appears to have been preached by Dr Manton on occasion of the death of a Christian lady. It was reprinted in 1694, in the following circumstances:—Dr Manton's daughter was Mrs Terry. She died in 1689. Her husband afterwards married a daughter of Mr Thomas Burroughs. This second wife died in 1693. On occasion of her death a small volume was published, containing a brief account of the two ladies, this sermon, and a number of papers from the pen of the second Mrs Terry. It is from this volume that the sermon is now reprinted. We have not seen a copy of the original edition.

A FUNERAL SERMON.

And they that weep as though they wept not.—1 Cor. VII. 30.

I SHALL insist upon that clause at this time. In it I shall observe:—

1. A concession. He grants them some kind of sorrow and grief.

2. A correction. He moderateth it.

1. He grants them some kind of sorrow, in that he puts weeping for adversity, the affection for the condition, the effect for the cause, as allowing them a holy sensibleness of their misery: 'they that weep.'

2. Then he correcteth and moderateth this sorrow: 'as if they wept not;' because he will not trust such a dangerous weapon in their own hands, and leave the Corinthians to the vileness and waywardness of their own affections: though I allow you to weep, yet it is as if you wept not.

The points are two:—

I. That God alloweth, yea, requireth of his people some sorrow and sensibleness of their condition.

II. That the heart must be so managed under this sorrow, that we may be said not to weep, rather than to weep, at the same time; it must be with such moderation. Or thus: Christians should so sorrow, under the sense of their condition, as if they did not sorrow. I shall speak briefly of both these.

Doct. 1. God requireth and alloweth some sorrow: 'They that weep.'

I shall—(1.) Show you that God doth so; (2.) Show you what this sorrow is.

1. To prove that so it is, I will not stand to instance places of scripture in a point so familiar.

The reasons are:—

First, This is the end why we have affections, that they may be exercised in their season. God hath planted in every man affections suitable to every condition in which he placeth him. It is said, 'The stars in their order fought against Siserá;' so affections. We have joy for prosperity, sorrow for adversity. What did God mean to give us such contrary affections, if not that they should be acted in their order and time? that these affections should, like the spokes, turn with the wheel of Providence? And therefore God complaineth much, as if he were frustrated of his end, when we do not answer Pro-

vidence by an exercise of those affections that are suitable to it ; as Jer. v. 3, ' I have smitten them, and they have not grieved.' God wondereth they should be so unnatural as not to grieve when stricken by him. So for mercy : Hosea xi. 3, ' I taught Ephraim to go, taking them by their arms ; but they knew not that I healed them : ' that is, they were not sensible of it, did not take notice, and were not suitably affected with the love of God. They are ranked among the rest of men that are under their natural condition, who are *ἀστοργοί*, without natural affection. To be flinted, horny-hearted, such as have no smartness, no quickness of affection, especially when the misery is of such a nature that near friends are taken from us, is very displeasing to God.

Secondly, Because that due exercise of sorrow under affliction is very serviceable and beneficial to the soul. (1.) To help spiritual duties. *Anima nunquam melius agit, quam ex impetu insignis alicujus affectus*—the soul works best when it hath the advantage of an affection. When the soul is made better by the bitterness of grief we feel, and the soul maketh the affection of sorrow to be *vehiculum*, a kind of chariot to carry on the work of repentance : Jer. ii. 19, ' Know and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God.' When the iron is hot, if you strike in you may get good : take the advantage of your hearts under your sorrows.

Thirdly, To make it serious. Sorrows gather the soul together, and make it more itself : a man cometh to himself in his grief. Usually God taketh this course with his people ; though they begin in the flesh they end in the spirit. Sorrow maketh reason to stand still. Solomon speaketh of bethinking themselves in the land of their afflictions, 1 Kings viii. 47. Jolly persons are slight, never think upon anything. Those that wallowed in pleasures did put far away the day of the Lord, Amos vi. 3. Till the prodigal was tamed by outward grief and want, he never had thoughts of returning. They that did not grieve when God struck them, Jer. v. 3, refused to receive correction. The more sorrowful the mind is, the more serious. Sorrow drieth up all those swimming thoughts and pleasing imaginations by which men drive away their time and divert their care ; and therefore there is a great deal of benefit comes by it ; it puts the soul in an advantageous way of receiving good.

Fourthly, This would double the affliction, not to grieve for such things as nearly touch us. To break the bent and course of nature is dangerous ; affections, when strongly stirred, must have their exercise, for fear of greater harms. It is an ease sometimes to mourn ; strangled grief chokes the heart. 1 Sam. xxv. 37, Nabal's heart became as a stone within him when he heard tidings that mightily affected him ; it had been better he had wept and mourned, as surgeons first let the sore soften before they begin to draw it. Job ii. 13, Job's friends said not a word to him the first seven days, ' for they saw that his grief was great ; ' they let sorrow have its course for a while. Stop floods in their full career, and they rage and swell ; when the death of a near friend hath opened the sluices, let the waters play a little in the channel till it be calmer ; passions spend and tire themselves in their exercise ; grief is sometimes eased by the expression of it. There

is reason too for it, if that of Cardan be true, that a heavy heart is eased by nothing so much as by sighs and tears; because tears empty the head of some vapours with which it is surcharged, and sighs lighten the heart of some fuliginous damps that oppress it. These are nature's offers for ease; you see the reasons.

2. What grief and sorrow this is that God alloweth and approveth. What is sinful grief I shall show you in the next point: here what is lawful and required.

I answer—Not every sorrow, for there is *λυπή πρὸς θάνατον*, as well as *πρὸς θεόν*, a godly sorrow and a worldly sorrow: 2 Cor. vii. 10, 'Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.' In the general it must be a godly sorrow. In these respects:—

[1.] You must see somewhat of God in the affliction. It is a motive this on both hands, both to sensibleness and patience, that it is from God: Heb. xii. 5, 'My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord,' because it is from God. A man slights every ordinary chance, but when it is from God, then it worketh more effectual upon the spirit. As we see in the case of the Philistines, 1 Sam. vi. 9. If that stroke that happened upon them were a chance, they would trouble themselves no further about it, but if it were from the God of Israel, they would advise about sending home the ark.

[2.] It must be serviceable sorrow, to set you the nearer to God. Sorrow is of the nature of those things that are required, not for themselves, but *πρὸς ἄλλο*, for some farther thing. You must not rest in your sorrow, but make use of it, that it may work kindly, employ it about the work of the sanctuary. Do not cherish your affections for their own sakes, but so as they may be helpful to the soul. Do not go about to still the affection, to think that is all that is required; let it do the soul service, and be glad you have your hearts under such an advantage. You know how Joshua served the Gibeonites; he did not slay them, but condemned them to be hewers of wood and drawers of water for the sanctuary. Grief and sorrow, well managed, will make a good drawer of water for the sanctuary. Make your sorrow your servant now to draw water for you, to make you smart and bleed for a good use and purpose. There is a gracious promise to them that sow in tears: Ps. cxxvi. 5, 'They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy.' Now we are in tears, but we do not sow tears; tears are not seed, we have not the crop. But what shall we do to make them seed? Spiritualise them, make them spiritual tears; let the water run in a holy channel, and then, like the waters of the sanctuary, they will be healing waters. The death of a friend, though never so dear to us, will never cause any but carnal tears; they minister a good occasion of mourning, but they do not minister a cause and ground of mourning; it is good to distinguish between the cause and the occasion. At such a time God calleth for more than ordinary sensibleness and sorrow; but not because he hath declared his pleasure concerning our friends; that is murmuring, not mourning. We should take this occasion indeed, but our sorrow should work upon a spiritual ground and object.

First, We should take this occasion to mourn for our own sins; miseries are but the effects of sin. You should labour to make sin

bitter by your present feeling. There should be, I say, a special renewing of our repentance by such providences; experience teacheth best. Now you see what sorrow sin bringeth; if men would but improve their occasions of sorrow thus, their hearts would be more keen against sin. It is a great argument to make men continue in a course, when it never proveth evil to them: therefore God challengeth them: Jer. ii. 5, 'What iniquity have you found in me, that you depart from me?' Just as a martyr said, I have served Jesus Christ these many years, and should I deny him now? But if men would thus observe these experiences, sin cannot make this challenge. We can say of sin, Thou hast killed my husband or wife at such a time; my daughter, my brother, at such a time, &c.; consider and say, Have not I provoked God to remove the comfort of a parent or near relation from me? It is said of Gideon, Judges viii. 16, that with briars and thorns he taught the men of Succoth. So God many times teaches us.

Secondly, We should take this occasion to weep for the public abominations. When Polus the tragedian was to act a mournful part, he brought in the urn, or the pot of ashes of his own dead son; that drew real tears from him. We are all to act a mournful part now, even to mourn for our abominations before the Lord. It may be your grief is flat and low; awaken it by these private instances. But take heed, let it not stay there; this is but to give the occasion; some other thing must be the cause and the object of it. Oh, pour out a little water upon the public sins; they are sparks that we have kindled! As the prophet speaks: Isa. i. 11, 'Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, and compass yourselves about with sparks.' It is meant of sins; not, as it is wrongly expounded, of walking in our own duties. Well, pour out this water upon these sparks. When a town is on fire every one will bring his bucket. Why, when the whole kingdom is compassed about with these sparks God giveth you these private occasions that you may bring your bucket to quench the common flame. So Luke xxiii. 28, 'Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.' Alas! who could choose but shed tears to part with such a blessed companion as our Saviour? Yet not for me, saith he, but for the survivors. Weep for your sins and calamities that are coming upon you; let such an occasion open the floodgates, but then cut out a passage for them, that they may run this way.

Thirdly, For the public miseries. Private sorrows should be swallowed up in the public. Look, as private mercies are no mercies, unless it be well with Sion; and therefore it is annexed as a special blessing, Ps. cxxviii. 6, that they should 'see their children's children, and peace upon Israel.' Defensive love is strong always, but in these times more strong, because every one expected the Messiah to come of his race. But that is nothing without peace upon Israel; it is not a consummate mercy without that. Private griefs are nothing in comparison of the miseries of Sion: 1 Sam. iv. 21, 'The glory is departed! the glory is departed!' Though she lost a father, lost a husband, that was sad; but she reflects upon the principal cause of grief, the misery of the church of God. So see Jer. xxii. 10, 'Weep ye not for the dead, neither bemoan him; but weep sore for him that goeth away, for he shall return no more to his native country,'—not for good Josiah, but the

misery of wicked Shallum. Thus it must be godly in respect to the end, to draw you to God these ways.

Use 1. It condemneth that slightness of spirit that is in most persons. God entereth into their families, and taketh hence a principal pillar, a husband or wife, but they are not affected with it; they carelessly slight it, as if nothing had been done, or some chance had befallen them. A Roman bragged, *Se nunquam cum matre, &c.*¹ They may say they were never comforted, they never needed it; they lay nothing to heart. Brethren, the use of divinity indeed is to compose and still the spirit, not to make it stupid. I am sorry that I am forced to speak anything to trouble you; I had rather comfort; but there is no true rest where there hath not been a due trouble, therefore I must a little speak against this stoical patience and insensibleness. And because discovery of sin doth more wound the heart than all the forcibleness of expression we can use, I shall not cudgel it with barren invectives, but labour to discover this sinful careless insensibleness to the heart, and distinguish it from a holy patience. I have been often upon such like subjects, therefore shall say the less now. I shall difference it chiefly in their grounds.

1. This slightness proceeds:—

First, From want of consideration. There can be no patience where there is no sense of evils. They will not give their thoughts leave to work upon such objects. I do not say we must make it the cause or object of our mourning, yet I say we must make it the occasion; this must awaken sad thoughts in us about our own sins or others' sufferings, but they will not think of it. These are such as are described by the prophet to 'put far away the evil day,' Amos vi. 3; that is, all consideration of God's dealings with them or others.

Secondly, From indulging pleasure. A voluptuous spirit is an insensible spirit: Eph. iv. 19, 'Who, being past feeling, give themselves over to work uncleanness with greediness.' So it is said, Hosea iv. 11, 'Whoredom and wine do take away the heart;' that is, all smartness and quickness of affection. When the soul is sleeping in pleasure, there is a brawniness brought over it. Pleasure is the drunkenness of the soul, and a drunken man feeleth nothing: Prov. xxiii. 35, 'They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not.'

Thirdly, Vain thoughts: Jer. iv. 14, 'How long shall vain thoughts dwell within thee?' Evil workings of spirit, either seeking a way how they may get out, or contriving how it maketh for their worldly advantage. The devil darts evil thoughts in us, how a cross by some sinful course may work for our temporal good, our state be augmented thereby, or capable of further contentment and advancement in the world.

2. Christian patience cometh from this ground; it doth not exclude a sense of evil, but a quieting of the heart against evil. These are the grounds and workings of the thoughts.

First, It seeth God in it: 1 Sam. iii. 18, 'It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good; Ps. xxxix. 9, 'I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, because thou didst it.'

¹ 'That he had never been reconciled with his mother;' implying that he had never disagreed with her.—ED.

Secondly, It seeth God acting with sovereignty : Dan. iv. 35, 'None can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?' Job ix. 12, 'Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say to him What doest thou?' Job xxxiii. 13, 'What, dost thou strive with him? he giveth no account of his matters.'

Thirdly, This sovereignty mollified with attributes; as—

[1.] With infinite justice: Dan. ix. 14, 'The Lord our God is righteous in all the works which he doeth;' just and righteous in all his ways. It is just because God doeth it; his will is the measure of his actings: Deut. xxvii. 15, 'All the people to say, Amen;' it is just, Lord.

[2.] With infinite wisdom: Isa. xxviii. 29, 'He is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.' He knoweth what is better for you than¹ you yourselves; for God hath the bowels of a mother, so the wisdom of a father.

[3.] With infinite love. It looketh upon God as a father: John xviii. 11, 'The cup that my Father hath given me, shall I not drink of it?' though a bitter cup, it is from my Father.

[4.] With infinite faithfulness: Ps. cxix. 75, 'I know thy judgments are right, and that in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me.' It looketh upon afflictions as a means in God's hands. I proceed to the second point:—

Doct. 2. That Christians ought so to sorrow under the sense of their afflictions as if they did not sorrow.

Their affections must be moderately exercised. Having in the former point showed what sorrow may be allowed, or is required of a Christian, I shall show you here what sorrow is disallowed or unlawful.

1. Such as overwhelmeth and dejecteth the spirit, so as you are not your own man. This is called a fainting, or a sinking of the soul under affliction: Heb. xii. 5, 'Faint not when thou are rebuked of the Lord.' As we must not slight it, so we must not faint under it. Fainting is *quando anima dejicitur de statu*, when the soul is put out of the condition of a free soul, and delivered over to the possession of another. God hath given every man this fee-simple, to possess himself. Now we are not ourselves when we are overcome with grief and sorrow; and therefore it is said, Luke xxi. 19, 'In patience possess your souls;' implying that a man hath not the use and command of his soul when he is overcome with grief; it doth as it were dispossess a man of himself. You know, of a drunken man we say, he is not himself, because he hath not the free use of his reason. Now this being overwhelmed with sorrow is expressed in scripture by this very term, being drunk; as Isa. lxiii. 6, 'I will tread them down in mine anger, I will make them drunk in my fury;' that is, bring such affliction as they shall not be able to enjoy themselves under it, to have the free use and exercise of their reason.

2. Such as is peevish: when men indulge themselves in their disquiets, and will not hearken to what might make for the settlement of their souls; when the heart yieldeth to passion, and huggeth grief, and will not let it go. There is a great deal of pride and stomach in men against God's dispensations, and therefore the prophet expresseth that intolerable misery that should light upon her children

¹ Qu. 'what is good for you better than' ?—ED.

by the stomachfulness that was in Rachel: Jer. xxxi. 15, 'Weeping for her children, she would not be comforted.' Men have no ear to hearken to what may be said for God, and therefore are resolved to hold the bitterness of their own thoughts. This stubborn pettishness and wilful grief may be sometimes in God's own chosen. It was in Jacob, Gen. xxxvii. 35; he 'refused to be comforted; for he said, I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning.' *I will*; it was a stomached, wilful grief. Christians, by a perverse, peevish justifying of their passions, they say of their sorrows as Jonah did of his anger: Jonah iv. 9, 'I do well to be angry.' When men take it for granted they do well in it, they resolve then to shut their ears against whatever might appease and quiet their thoughts.

3. Such as are impatient and discontented, as if God had not dealt wisely or worthily with them. When a full vessel is shaken the water will splash over; and when there is such a tumult in the heart, unseemly expressions will drop from us, as if God should not have dealt thus with us as to take away these comforts in which were all our solace, the staff and the stay of the family. We, that are neighbours, are apt very often, in discontent, to say, What a serviceable and useful person hath God taken away, and so many bad ones left! as if God had not made a right choice. Foolish man would be accounted wiser than God; but if a man were well skilled in God's attributes he would never murmur, especially if he did but consider this cometh from a wise God. The cause of all the disorder in the heart is the want of fearing God's name; we are not skilled in his attributes. Alphonsus blasphemously said, *Si in principio mundi ipse Deo adfuisset, multa melius ornatiusque condenda essent*—things should have been ordered better if he had been of God's council. Many of you do not utter such expressions, but yet too often conceive such thoughts in your hearts. You will not think so; ay, but what mean the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the oxen?—such expressions as these, Oh, would to God I had died first! as David, 2 Sam. xviii. 33, 'O Absalom, my son, my son! would to God that I had died for thee!' And again, Would to God I had been dead a long time ago rather than to survive my happiness; all my estate gone in an instant, as (brethren) in these empty, trying times it is many a man's case. But remember, foolish man, the all-wise God thought it fittest for thee. Yet thus doth the prophet Elijah, when he was driven into the wilderness by Jezebel, 1 Kings xix. 4, in a discontent, request for himself that he might die, 'It is enough now, O Lord; take away my life.'

4. Such as unfit for duty. Affections are no further lawful than they fit for duty. When grief taketh off our hearts from the duties of our general or particular calling, it is an evil grief. See Gen. xxxv. 19-21, Rachel died and was buried, and Israel journeyed and spread his tent. Having lost so dear a wife, he doth not stand puling by the tomb, but Israel journeyed, he went on about his business. We ought so far to be sensible of Providence as may serve to quicken us to duty, not to hinder us. There is a great question now, whether we ought to fear or hope in our misery: some of one side cry down fear; some on the other side cry down hope. Why, brethren, there is not much matter in the exercise of either of these affections, but according as they do

more or less quicken you to duty. If you be the more earnest in prayer, because you hope success is near, truly that is a good disposition of heart; if because fear, that is the most unchristian. I confess, fear is good when it ends in duty. Jehoshaphat 'feared, and set himself to seek the Lord,' 2 Chron. xx. 3; and Noah, 'moved with fear, prepared an ark,' Heb. xi. 7. Brethren, the bare exercise of affections is but a natural and an indifferent thing; the great trial of them is when they fit you the more for the service that God requires of you. Therefore, when persons grieve so for the loss of a husband, wife, children, or estate, that they have no mind to pray, no mind to go about their callings with any comfort, that is an evil grief. It is true that God winketh at some omissions of duties for a small while in such cases, till we are able to manage our thoughts and digest our sorrow; and the letter of the law giveth place to such great necessities. As Aaron's excuse is but reasonable, Lev. x. 19, 'Such things have befallen me this day; and if I had eaten the sin-offering, should it be accepted with the Lord?'—the death of his two sons: though he held his peace, he could not tell how for the present to frame his heart to a joyful duty. As if a minister cannot tell how to bring his heart to preach, if God hath entered upon his family, taken away a wife or children thence. I confess this cometh from corruption, but in such cases God winketh at it for a short time. The reasons are:—

[1.] Because otherwise our carriage would be very dishonourable and derogatory to Jesus Christ, as if he were not better to us than all the comforts that we lose: 1 Sam. i. 8, as Elkanah said to Hannah, 'Why weepest thou? am not I better to thee than ten sons?' So why weepest thou? Is not Christ better to thee than ten wives, ten children, ten parents, a thousand times as much as thou hast lost? If we had but faith to see it, Christ is to a believer whatever he wanteth. The people of God in the wilderness wanted houses: Ps. xc. 1, 'Lord, thou art our habitation.' A Christian hath never more comfort than when he seeth that particular thing made up in Christ which was taken from him by the providence of God. If a believer has lost her husband, she seeth Christ her husband. So for any other relation; if a parent, seeth Christ his parent; if a brother, Christ is a brother. We are to Christ instead of all these relations, and therefore why should not Christ be so to us? See Mat. xii. 50, 'Whosoever doth the will of my Father, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.' Mark, we are so to him, and therefore why should we not account Christ to be so to us? Certainly it is a great dishonour and disparagement to him if we do not see all our losses abundantly made up in him.

[2.] It would be a dishonour to our profession. It is a credit to Christianity that the professors of it can be joyful in all conditions: Heb. x. 34, 'Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, ἀρπάζην; though all they had were snatched from them by rude hands, yet they were joyful. Let guilty Cains look with fallen countenances, Gen. iv. 6. Let the pharisees please themselves in their sour looks, Mat. vi. 16. A Christian's countenance should show him to be above his misery, sprightly and cheerful. Though you take away their coat, as Joseph's mistress did, you cannot take away their comfort; they are glad they can escape with their conscience, though they should leave

their coat behind them. I remember Scaliger playeth the critic with Homer, because champion Achilles is brought in weeping; his beloved Briseïs was taken from him. So it is a disgrace to our high profession when a Christian is brought in *δακρύσας*, weeping; it is beneath you. It is said in Acts v. 41, 'They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ.' Philpot's stocks in the Bishop of London's coal-house were but a pair of organs, as he saith. Nor is it true only in these honourable sufferings for the glory of our religion, but in the strokes of Providence in this very business of deceased friends. The apostle makes it the property of pagans to mourn excessively: 1 Thes. iv. 13, 'Sorrow not as those that have no hope,' *i. e.*, as pagans; they did abound in it: as see Gen. l. 3, compared with ver. 10. Joseph mourned for Jacob but seven days, the Egyptians seventy, even ten times as much. Nay, pagans err so much this way, that if they could not find grief they would force grief; and therefore, at their funerals, if they had no sympathy, they would flash their faces and cut their flesh, that they might be sorrowful. And therefore God saith, Deut. xiv. 1, 'Ye shall not cut yourselves and make baldness in your eyes for the dead; ye are the children of the Lord your God;' that is, you have higher principles, you know such sorrow needless. And hence was it that the primitive Christians were wont to sing triumphant psalms at funerals, as it appeareth out of many places of Chrysostom, to show they had higher hopes of their departed friends.

[3.] It is very prejudicial. You have no benefit, but a great deal of hurt by it, 2 Cor. vii. 10. There it is summed up in one word, 'Worldly sorrow worketh death;' that is, chiefly, sorrow for worldly things, that works death temporal and eternal in its desert; temporal death as it exhausteth the spirits, wasteth the marrow. Worldly sorrow leaveth a very strong impression upon the body, as Solomon saith, Prov. xvii. 22, 'A broken spirit drieth the bones;' it dulleth and deadens the heart. If a man would not save his tears, yet he should reserve them, keep them up for holy uses. God may give you many spiritual occasions to empty your bottle; do not be over-free of them. Affections over-exercised are usually restrained against the next occasion. And as they procure death in respect of the vigour of the body and soul, so an eternal death too; it deserveth it. And so the apostle is to be understood; for he opposeth it to godly sorrow, which hereafter you shall see you have no cause to repent of, as you have of worldly. Grief is a most serious passion; and though a man may forget himself in his joy, he should not forget to think of the danger; worldly sorrow worketh death.

[4.] It is very unreasonable. If men would cite their affections before the tribunal of reason, and ask them what is the matter why they are so violently stirred, they might discern much of their folly: Ps. xlii. 5, David calleth himself to an account, 'Why art thou so disquieted, O my soul? why art thou cast down within me?' Ask why it is, and you will see either no reason, or a corrupt one. *Iniqua lex est quæ se examinari non patitur*, saith Tertullian; and so it is an evil heart that will not be called to an account. Suspect those passions that are loth to be examined. Do but ask yourselves, Why do I

grieve now? you shall see the answer will be foolish, unreasonable, unthankful, or savouring of discontent. Why, it may be you will say, Many dear comforts are taken from me. O brethren, that is an ill expression; no outward comfort can be taken from a Christian. We should live in such a continual waiting for God's pleasure, and in such a quiet submission thereunto, as not to look upon our comforts as taken from us. Job indeed useth the word, Job i. 21, 'The Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken;' but he useth it so as if he would be understood as if the Lord had accepted of the resignation; for he blesses God for it. Even our highest comfort, our lives, the lives of the saints, are not taken from them; God doth but, as it were, accept of the resignation. As Stephen, Acts vii. 59, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' So Rev. xxii. 20, 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.' It is said of the wicked indeed, that their lives are snatched or taken away: as Job xxvii. 8, 'What hope hath the hypocrite when God taketh away his soul?' or snatcheth it away. So Luke xii. 20, 'Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee,' ἀπαιτοῦσιν ἀπὸ σοῦ—they shall challenge and get away thy soul from thee. Therefore we should resign up our holy friends to God, as well as they do themselves. But let us see how unreasonable this very particular is of mourning for the dead.

Is it to do them good? They are not the better for our tears, they are past recovery by our weeping. Is it not to envy their blessedness to wish them alive again? 2 Sam. xii. 23, 'Wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, he shall not come to me.' Is it because they were so good that we mourn? The better for God; they are gone to their own home. Is it because so bad? 2 Sam. xiii. 39. David was comforted concerning Amnon, because dead, though he died in sin. Or is it because they died so soon which heightens your loss? Consider who decreed it; are you wiser than God? Is it for your own good you weep? That is an holy weeping: 'Weep as if you wept not.' Thus if men would expostulate with themselves, they would see the unreasonableness of their sorrow; it is to no purpose. We express things to no purpose by water spilt on the ground: certainly tears in such cases are but spilt water.

Use 1. To instruct you to take home this lesson, so to sorrow under the sense of your afflictions as if you did not sorrow, be the loss what it will; though I shall chiefly speak to the present occasion. Do not let the grief oppress your heart. Ay! but how shall we do so? I shall give you some motives; as—

1. Be sure to get an interest in spiritual mercies. The doctrine saith, Christians ought so to sorrow as if they sorrowed not. We cannot speak to others in this language, unless we should persuade men to slight the hand of God. We throw bones to dogs, but bread to children. We cannot comfort you in a carnal way: P's. xciv. 19, 'In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts refresh my soul.' Mark, *thy* comforts. To comfort a man's self upon carnal grounds argueth an insensibleness of God's hand, and it is a shrewd sign that God gives us over to ourselves. Therefore, if you take comfort, take it from your interest in spiritual mercies. If you cannot look upon them under a condition of propriety as yours (as every Christian can-

not), yet at least so far look upon them, that from thence all your comfort must be fetched. It is a neglect of providence to go away with a general thought. We must not sorrow too much, and yet we are to consider whether we have good ground why we should be comforted. God giveth wicked men these experiences of sorrow that he may awaken them, and show them there is no comfort to be had thence whence they would fetch their comforts, in carnal delights: Isa. lvii 21, 'There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.' 'There is a peace in their fancies and conceits, but 'no peace, saith my God.' There is a great deal of hurt done this way by sermons. Ministers instruct men in a moral way, that they should not grieve too much; but they do not instruct a man upon what grounds he should not grieve: you must be sure of better mercies, or at least look after them for your comfort. A man that has an interest in Christ is τετράγωνος ἄνθρωπος, a four-squared man, unmoved in all conditions. There can be no peace between a man's affections and condition till there be a peace between him and God. Mark that, Ecces. ix. 7, 'Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works.' When God accepteth us, we may then eat our bread with a merry heart, let things fall out how they will.

2. Live in a continual expectation of the creature's change. Things are not half so burdensome when we look for them. A burden cast upon a man's back breaketh it; but when it is compacted and fitted for his shoulders, he goeth away well enough with it. It was some solace that Job could say, Job iii. 26, 'The evil that I feared is come upon me.' Suppose it be your own or your friend's dissolution, live in a continual readiness to part with life, or anything else, at God's call and intimation, and it will not be so grievous to you when it comes.

3. Learn a holy greatness of mind, to be able to live above the creature. Consider the happiness of man is in God alone: all happiness consisteth in conformity to, and communion with, God, the chief good; so that though the creature be gone, your happiness is not gone. That troubleth a man most when his happiness is gone, he will not care so much for other things. It is good to see by what enjoyment they reckon themselves happy; if to have husband, wife, or a house well furnished, everything to our command, then when God taketh away these things your comfort is gone. There is much of people's conceits this way. But consider, what do you reckon the best of your enjoyments? that you have God for your portion: Ps. cxliv. 15, 'Happy is the people whose God is the Lord.' So see Ps. xxx. 7, 'Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.' Set but the heart right in this point, and it will be well. Grace is but the change of a man's chiefest good and utmost end; that is only the difference between a natural man and a spiritual man about the conceits of happiness.

There are other considerations—as the shortness of our misery, the continual abode of other comforts with us; though some be gone, we are not left naked to the world; the happy end of all, the good of our souls. But this for a taste.

Men will think a sermon is to no purpose that is spoken to comfort persons in this kind. To this end:—

1. Consider there is none of us but may have need of comfort one time or other ; though our mountain standeth strong for the present, it may be removed, and it is good to lay up against a dear year. Such truths are most welcome when they come in their season.

[1.] Consider you may have a season when it will be necessary for you : 'Who knoweth what a day may bring forth?' The woman that entertained the prophet, he would fain do her good. No, saith she, 2 Kings iv. 13, 'I dwell among mine own people.' But now that very woman, as in 2 Kings viii. 5, 'She cried to the king for her house and her land ;' she that did not stand in need of the prophet, stood in need of the prophet's man. You have your wife, your children, and friends about you. Oh, there may a time come when you will be glad of one drop of this comfort to support you when they are gone.

[2.] Consider, when it is upon you, you will find it the hardest thing in the world truly to assuage your grief, to grieve so as if you did not grieve. Afflictions are evil, and we are apt to make them worse, to turn wormwood into poison : Heb. xii. 11, 'No chastening for the present but will seem grievous.' Seneca could slightly speak of miseries when he had the use of rich gardens about Rome ; but when he had lost all, he was as much to seek as others.

Now I shall apply all that hath been spoken to this present occasion :—1st, To show you why we should mourn ; 2dly, Why mourn so, as if we did not mourn.

First, Why we should mourn. Consider, we have lost a pious neighbour, and that deserveth sensibleness.

1. Because such are a great loss ; we have lost her service, help, and the benefit that we might have had by her. There is no member of Christ but one way or another is useful to the community ; and indeed we found her to be so. We lose an example, we lose useful conference, we lose the pledge of a blessing to a family, to a neighbourhood. May we not say of her as of David : Acts xiii. 36, 'After he had served his generation by the will of God, he fell asleep?' She did serve her generation, and it was her grief that she did it no more and better ; it should be ours that she did it no longer. Serviceable Christians are a great loss, especially in these times of need.

2. It is a sad intimation to us, and therefore we ought to be very sensible of such a loss : Isa. lvii. 1, 'The righteous perish, and no man layeth it to heart, none considering that they are taken away from the evil to come.' Wicked men think they are the bane of a place : *Plurimos deficit Christiani nominis gratia ; Christianos ad leones*. Wicked men are but preserved in reference to the godly ; they are but as a fence of thorns about a garden of roses. Now when the roses are cropped off, what shall become of the thorns but be cast into the fire? God will dash the potter's vessel : Gen. xix. 22, 'Haste thee, escape to Zoar, for I cannot do anything till thou be come thither.' *I cannot*, mark that : Exod. xxxii. 10, 'Let me alone, and I will make of thee a great people.' God offereth Moses composition : Acts xxvii. 24, 'The Lord hath given thee all them that sail with thee.' These are the staff and the stay, therefore we have reason to be sensible of their removal from us.

Use 2. We have reason also to be comforted.

First, For the glory that cometh to God by her sweet departure. Those that have envied her life, may wish for her death, even such solace as she felt in the most bitter agonies: Num. xxiii. 10, 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end be like his.' It is a great comfort that wicked men have not wherewithal to blast religion, when they see how the love of God can compose our spirits in the greatest extremities that befall us either in life or death.

Secondly, That she hath left us for glory. It was indeed through many throes, and pains, and sorrows; but death played the midwife, to help her into glory. It is the apostle's exhortation to the Thessalonians, first epistle, chap. iv. ver. 13, that they should not sorrow, even as others which have no hope concerning them which are asleep in Jesus; but admonish them to comfort one another with these words, that at Christ's coming, they which survive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we be ever with the Lord. 'Wherefore, comfort one another with these words.'