

THE ART OF MOURNING.

SERMON III.

But because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thyself before me, and didst rend thy clothes, and weep before me; I have even heard thee also, saith the Lord.—2 CHRON. XXXIV. 27.

As the waters issuing from the sanctuary, mentioned by the prophet Ezekiel, grew deeper and deeper; first to the ancles, then to the knees, and after to the loins, until it came to an overflowing river, so hath it fared with us in handling of this text; wherein, from tenderness of heart, we have waded deeper and deeper through the mysteries of humiliation in the inward man, until at length from thence we are broken forth to the outward expressions of Josiah's inward humiliation, his 'rending of his clothes,' and overflowing floods of 'tears;' which sprung partly from his apprehension of ruin at hand, to come upon God's sanctuary, and partly from the sorrow and sense of sin in himself and the people, as causes of his fear.

But to come to the text now read in your hearing, 'And didst rend thy clothes, and weep before me,' here we have set down the outward expression of Josiah's inward humiliation.

For true humiliation shews itself as well outwardly as inwardly. Now, the outward expression of his inward affection is set down in two things:

1. By rending of his clothes; 2. By his weeping.

No doubt but he did express his sorrow as well by words as by these gestures, although they be not here set down with the other; for he might for the time be surprised with so great a measure of sorrow and grief, as could not be expressed presently at that instant, or we may conceive that for the time he was so thoroughly humbled, that he could not speak orderly. Wherefore God did regard and look more to his affections and tears than to his words, for he rent his clothes and wept before God. As it is written of the poor publican, that he could not say much, and looked down with his eyes, saying, 'Lord, be merciful to me a sinner,' Luke xviii. 13; and as it was with the poor woman in the gospel who came to Christ weeping, and washed his feet with her tears, yet she said nothing, Luke vii. 38; and as when Christ, upon the cock's third crowing, looked upon Peter, we

find not what he said, but that he went out and wept bitterly, Luke xxii. 61, 62; so here, we may imagine Josiah's affection was too full of sorrow to speak distinctly and composedly; for from a troubled soul can proceed nothing but troubled words; from a broken heart comes broken language. But howsoever, likely it is that Josiah did speak somewhat; for God saith, 'I have even also heard thee.' But to leave this and come to the outward expressions here set down, let us learn somewhat from his rending of his clothes and weeping.

'Rending of clothes' was a thing frequently used in old times, as we see in the Scriptures; and it was a visible representation of the inward sorrow of the heart. Job rent his clothes, Job i. 20; his friends rent their clothes, Job ii. 12; Paul and Barnabas rent theirs, Acts xiv. 14; the high priest rent his clothes, being to accuse Christ, Mark xiv. 63; and Hezekiah rent his clothes when he heard the words of Rabshakeh, Isa. xxxvii. 1. Nay, this was a common action, and frequently used among the heathen also; for they likewise, upon any disastrous accident, were used to rend their clothes; as we read of a heathen king, that having his city invaded round about with enemies, rent his clothes.* So that it hath been the custom both of God's church and also of heathen, to rend their clothes. But what is the ground or reason of this? The reason of such their rending of clothes was, because that in their sorrow they thought themselves unworthy to wear any. They forgot all the comforts of this life; as holy Josiah forgets his estate, his throne, his royal majesty, and crown. He looks up to the great God, and considers duly whom he stood under, and the miserable estate of the people, over whom he was governor; and thereupon he rends his clothes, shewing hereby that he was unworthy of those ornaments wherewith he was covered. We know that clothes have divers uses; as,

1. First, For *necessity*, to cover our nakedness, and to preserve from the injuries of the weather.

2. Secondly, Clothes are given for *distinction of sexes and degrees*: to know the great man from the mean, the woman from the man.

3. And lastly, *They serve for ornaments* to honour our vile flesh, which is so base that it must fetch ornaments from base creatures. Now, so far as they served for ornaments, he rent his clothes, as thinking himself unworthy of any garments; for he being in grief doth rend his clothes, thinking with himself, why should I stand upon clothes and outward things to cover me? God is angry. Till he be appeased I will take no pleasure in any earthly thing. Therefore, apprehending the wrath of God, he rent his clothes. Well, this is but an outward expression, and therefore it must proceed from inward truth. This rending of clothes was a national ceremony, which seeing we have not used amongst us, we must rend our hearts with grief. For the rending of clothes shews the rending of the heart before, without which there is no acceptance with God; for the rending of the clothes without the rending of the heart is but hypocrisy; as Joel ii. 13, he says, 'Rend your hearts, and not your garments, ye hypocrites.' So that outward expressions of sorrow are no further good, than when they come from inward grief and affection. Now, when both these are joined together it is a comely thing; for wherein stands comeliness but when all the parts of our body do agree in proportion, when one limb is not bigger than another? So it is uncomely and an hypocritical thing for a man to have all outward

* Query, Is this an allusion to the Sultan—the 'raging Turk' of the Puritans—in his anguish at the siege of Scodra? Cf. among others Trapp on Ezra ix. 3.—G.

expression and yet to have no inward grief. This is but acting of humiliation, when we hang down the head like a bulrush, and the heart is not sound. But outward expressions are good when the heart is grieved to purpose; when they proceed from inward humiliation.

Quest. And why ought this to be?

Ans. Because both body and soul have a part in the action of sin. Therefore it is needful that they should be joined in humiliation for sin. There is no sin of the body but the soul hath part in it, nor any sin in the soul but the body hath part in it. Therefore both body and soul should be humbled together. Labour then to have outward expressions and shows of sorrow come from a true sorrowful heart. There be two things in the religious actions of men.

1. There is the outward action or expression.

2. There is the inward, which gives life to the other.

The outward is easy, and subject to hypocrisy. It is an easy matter to rend clothes and to force tears, but it is a hard matter to afflict the soul. The heart of man taketh the easiest ways, and lets the hardest alone, thinking to please God with that. But God will not be served so; for he must have the inward affections, or else he doth abhor the outward actions. Therefore let us as well labour for humble hearts as humble gestures. We must rend our hearts and not our clothes, when we come into the presence of God. We must labour, as to shew humility, so to have humility, that so we be not like hypocrites, who make show of a great deal of devotion in carriage, but yet have none in heart; a great deal of outward humiliation, whenas they have none within.

The papists are wicked and erroneous in all their devotions, especially in the point of justification, and in other points of the worship of God; for is it not a superstitious error, to think to please God with outward observations, when they do not come from inward truth? Their religion is all an outside, consisting merely of outward performances. But true devotion, the Scripture teacheth, cometh from a heart judicially understanding the case of its own self; considering what a great God it hath to deal withal, a God full of glory and majesty. Doth God love blind sacrifices? No. Devotion must come from the heart, and spread itself from thence into the countenance and carriage. For then it is true, when the outward expression doth shew the inward disposition.

Use. This reproves the negligence of people in these times. Where is their inward humiliation? Nay, where is their outward humiliation? In popery, there is an acting of humiliation. They whip themselves in their bodies, and other such outward fooleries and gestures they have in their hypocritical devotions. Thus do they in some sort humble themselves. But how few are there amongst us that humble themselves in apprehension of their own misery, who yet, if they look to their own persons, have cause enough! Yea, and how few are there that are humbled for the miseries of the church abroad! Where shall we find a mourning soul?

Well, seeing it is not a custom amongst us to rend our clothes, yet let us make conscience of being proud in apparel; for it is a wicked and a fearful thing when men will regard some wicked and foolish fashion, and set more by it than by God's favour, threatenings, and judgments abroad. Many there are that, instead of rending their clothes, come into God's house to shew their bravery; to see and to be seen. Where they should most of all humble themselves, there they come to shew their pride, even before God. Whereas they should come to hear the voice of the great God

of heaven, and stand in his presence, who is a 'consuming fire.' Before whom the very angels cover their faces and the earth trembles, they, contrariwise, come to outface and provoke him with their pride. We see Josiah, though he were a king, he rent his clothes, forgot all his bravery, and considers himself not so much a king over the people, over whom God had set him, as a subject to God. Wherefore, though, as I said, the custom of rending of clothes be not used in our church, yet let us ever make conscience of rending our hearts, and so to make our peace with God, as this good king did. It follows;—

'And weptest before me.'

In which words is set down *the second outward expression of Josiah's inward humiliation*, which is 'weeping.' This came nearer to him than rending of clothes, for it touched his body. Hence, in a word, observe,

Doct. 1. That the body and soul must join together in the action of humiliation, for the soul and body go together in the acting of sin, therefore they must go together in humiliation. As they were both made by God, and redeemed by Christ, so they sin and practise good together. Now I will shew three ways wherein the soul and body have communion one with another, whereby it may appear how reasonable and fitting a thing it is they should be both humbled together.

1. First, The soul and body have communion together *by way of impression or information*; for sensible things have an impression upon the senses, and so come into the soul; for nothing comes into it but through the senses of the body; because, though the soul may imagine golden mountains, and things that it never saw, yet the working of the soul depends upon the body, for the body informs it of all outward objects. As the body is beholding to the soul for the ruling and guiding of it, so the soul is beholding to the body for many things; as now in the very sacrament, God helps the soul with the senses; Christ, as it were, in the sacrament enters through the senses more lively than in the preaching of the word, for there he enters in by the ears, but in the sacrament he is seen, tasted, handled, felt. So that the soul and body have communion together by way of information.

2. Secondly, The soul and body have communion together *by way of temptation*; for the soul standing in need of many outward things which are pleasing and delightful, and having sympathy with the body, it is led away by the body. Outward objects are pleasing to the senses of carnal men. Now these passing through the senses into the soul, it is led away, and so they become a dangerous temptation.

3. Thirdly, The soul and the body have communion together, both in sinful and in good actions, *by way of subjection or execution*; for God hath made the body, with the parts thereof, to be the instruments and weapons of the soul. The body is a house wherein the soul is kept. It is a shop for the soul. Now the soul useth the body, with the members thereof, as instruments or weapons, either to honour God or dishonour him. The wicked fight against God with all the members of their body, with their eyes, tongue, feet, hands. Now the body having thus a part in sin, as well as the soul, therefore it is necessary that the body and soul should join together in humiliation.

Caution. Here we must take heed of a notable sleight of the devil in popery. The papists think the body only in fault for sin, and therefore they humble and afflict their bodies for it, while they puff up their soul

with pride, a conceit of merit and satisfaction. They are falsely humble and truly proud, while they afflict the body and omit the soul. They are falsely humbled, because they humble their body only; but truly proud, because they think by afflicting and humbling their bodies to merit. But let us take heed of this gross error, and remember to let both soul and body join in the work.

Doct. 2. The second thing here to be noted is, that *when God will afflict or humble a man, it is not a kingdom that will save him.* As Josiah, though he were a monarch,—for he was an absolute monarch,—yet if God threaten, his kingdom can do him no good. If God will abase men, whether they be his children or enemies, it is not a kingdom can protect them. When God shewed Belshazzar the handwriting upon the wall, he could take no comfort in anything, Dan. v. 5; yea, his dear children, if he shew but tokens of his displeasure against them, though they be kings, as Josiah was, yet he can humble them. If God roar, it is not their greatness can keep them; if not now, yet he will make them to tremble hereafter.

Doct. 3. The third thing here that we learn from the example of Josiah, being a king, is, *That tears and mourning for sin, when it comes from inward grief, is a temper well befitting any man.* It is a carriage befitting a king. It is not unbeseeming any, of what sex or degree soever. It is no womanish or base thing. When one hath to deal with God, he must forget his estate and take the best way to meet with God. This is evident by many instances, for David, though a man of war, yet when he had to deal with God he watered his couch with his tears, Ps. vi. 6. So Hezekiah, though a great king, yet he humbled himself, Isa. xxxviii. 1, *seq.* Nay, our blessed Saviour himself did it 'with strong cries and tears,' Heb. v. 7, when he had to deal with God.

Use. This serves for the justification of this holy abasement and humbling of ourselves. When we have to deal with God, then all abasement is little enough. 'I will be yet more vile than thus,' saith holy David, 2 Sam. vi. 22. So let us say when we have to deal with God; I will be yet more vile, and so cast ourselves down before the Lord. All expression of devotion is little enough, so it be without hypocrisy. Yet I pray give me leave once again to give warning unto you concerning outward actions, for most have conceived wrong of devotion and humiliation. They think that devotion is only in outward actions; as in outward act to hear a little, to read, confer, or pray a little, whereas in truth these outward acts do only make up the body of devotion, which, without the soul, namely, the inward religious affection, looking unto God, is no better than a dead carrion. Our outward expression must come from the apprehension of the goodness, mercy, and justice of God, before whom the very angels veil their faces. It is not outward devotion that will serve the turn, as to come to the church with this bare conceit and forethought; I will go pray, and kneel, and express all outward carriage, in the meantime neglecting to stir up the soul to worship God with these or like thoughts; I will go to the place where God is, where his truth is, where his angels are, to hear that word whereby I shall be judged at the last day. Therefore let all holy actions come from within first, and thence to the outward man. Let us work upon our hearts a consideration of the goodness, justice, majesty, and mercy of God, and then let there be an expression in body, such as may bring men off from their sins; for else there is a spirit of superstition that will draw men far from God in seeming services, conceiving that God will accept of outward and formal expressions only. Well, we see that weeping and mourning

for sins is a carriage not unbeseeming for a king. Therefore it is a desperate madness not to humble ourselves and be abased, now we have to deal with God. Your desperate atheists of the world will not tremble at threatenings, nor humble themselves till death comes, which humbles them and makes them tremble ; whereas, on the contrary, that soul which, feeling the wrath of God, humbles itself betimes, and trembles at threatenings, that soul, I say,—when the great judgment of death comes, and appearance before God,—looks death in the face with comfort ; whereas your desperate atheists, that can now scorn God, swear at every word, and blaspheme God to his face ; let God but shew his displeasure, they tremble and quake upon any noise of fear. Therefore when we have to deal with God, it is wisdom, and the ground of all courage, to humble and abase ourselves with fear, as Josiah did although he were a king.

‘ And thou didst weep before me.’

His tender heart did melt itself into tears. In the first clause of the verse you have his tender heart set down, and here we have *the melting of the tender heart*. There we have the cloud, here we have the shower. Therefore I will speak something of the original of tears. We know that tears are strained from the inward parts, through the eyes ; for the understanding first conceiveth cause of grief upon the heart, after which the heart sends up matter of grief to the brain, and the brain being of a cold nature, doth distil it down into tears ; so that if the grief be sharp and piercing, there will follow tears after from most. But to come to the particulars ; we see the provoking cause of tears, from without, in Josiah, was the danger of his kingdom, hearing the judgment of God threatened against his country and place. Whence, for the instruction of magistrates, I will enforce this point.

Doct. 4. That it concerns magistrates above all others, to take to heart any danger whatsoever, that is upon their people ; for as kings are set above all other people in place, so they should be above them in goodness and grace. They ought, above all others, to take to heart any judgment, either upon them already, or feared ; as good Josiah did, whom, while he looked not so much to himself and his own good, as to that state whereof he was king, the very threatenings of judgment against it, made to express his grief with tears. The bond that knits the king to the people, and the people to the king, requires this ; for kings are heads, and shepherds over the people. Now the shepherd watcheth over his flock ; the head is quickly sensible of any hurt of the body ; all the senses are provident for the body. So it should be with all great persons in authority. They should cherish the good estate of the subjects as their own ; for they are committed to their care. And even as the head doth care for the body, and forecast for it, so those that are in authority should forecast for any good to the body of the commonwealth. An excellent example of this we have in holy David ; who, when there was a judgment coming upon his people, Lord, saith he, let the judgment come upon me and my father’s house ; what have these sheep done ?’ 2 Sam. xxiv. 17. And surely such magistrates as are tenderly affected with the case of those under them, shall lose nothing by it ; for the people likewise will carry a tender affection towards them again. As we see, when the people went to fight against Absalom, they would not let David go with them, but they said to him, ‘Thou art worth ten thousand of us,’ 2 Sam. xviii. 3 ; that is, they had rather that ten thousand of them should die in the battle, than that David should have any hurt come to

him; so he lost nothing for his love and affection towards the people, for they shewed the like love to him in his distress. So likewise when Josiah was dead, the people wept largely for him (for with him perished all the glory of that flourishing kingdom), as we may read in the story, 2 Chron. xxxv. 24, 25, compared with Zech. xii. 11. They mourned for him with an exceeding great mourning, in Hadadrimmon, in the valley of Megiddo. So that there is no love lost between the magistrate and the people; for if the magistrate be tenderly affected to them, the people will likewise weep for him again, and lament his case in his distress. But now to come to a more general instruction, we will leave speaking of Josiah as king, and take him into consideration as an holy man, and make him a pattern unto us all, of whatsoever civil condition we be; and so we learn this point,

Doct. 5. That it is the duty of every Christian to take to heart the threatenings of God against the place and people where he doth live; to take to heart the afflictions and miseries of the church and commonwealth, the grievances of others as well as his own. The mourning and weeping of Josiah was for the estate of the church, when he heard the judgment threatened against the place and inhabitants thereof. There be tears of compassion for ourselves and for others. There were both of them in Josiah; for no doubt but he wept for himself and his own sins, and over and above his own had special tears of compassion for his people. Thus then it becomes a Christian that will have the reward of Josiah, to abase his heart as he did for the estate of the church. Good Nehemiah took to heart the grief of his country. The joy of his own preferment did not so much glad him, as the grief for his nation the Jews cast him down. What joy can a true heart have, now the church of God is in affliction? We are all of one house. When one part of the house is a-fire, the other part had need to look to itself. There were many things wrought upon the heart of Josiah, which caused him to weep; so there are many causes should move us, as the seeing of the sins that are committed in the land ought to make us grieve, and to express our grief one way or other. And the love of Christ, were it in us, would make us mourn; as when we hear God blasphemed, and his name dishonoured, and when we see the people bent to idolatry; how can this but break even a heart of stone, nay, a gracious heart will mourn and weep for the judgment of God upon wicked men, considering them as men, and as the creatures of God. Thus Christ wept for the wicked Jews in Jerusalem, though they were his enemies: 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,' &c., Luke xix. 41; and so good Jeremiah, though he were ill used, and exceedingly abused by the people, yet he saith, 'Oh that my head were water, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for them,' Jer. ix. 1. Though they had wronged, persecuted, and counted him a contentious fellow, only because he taught the truth of God; yet such was the affection of tender-hearted Jeremiah, that he desired that he might weep day and night for them. But continual weeping must have a lasting spring affording continual issues of tears, which Jeremiah not finding in himself (such is the dryness of every man's heart, that it is soon emptied of tears), and thereupon fearing he should not weep enough, he doth earnestly desire it, and if hearty wishes may obtain, he would have it to be supplied with a plentiful measure of tears in his lamentation for the ensuing calamity of his people: 'O that mine head were a well of water, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!'

Quest. But why did not Jeremiah rather pray that they had a fountain of tears to weep for themselves?

Ans. Because he, knowing the hardness of their hearts, thought it to no end to entreat them to weep for themselves. Their hearts were harder than the nether millstone. They never desired it, yet he weeps for them. Thus we see how godly men have been formerly affected, and [that] it is our duty even to weep and mourn for the very wicked. We have matter enough of lamentation and weepings at this day, if we look abroad; and at home, if we look to judgments felt and feared, we have cause to weep, before the decree come out against us. Therefore we should meet God beforehand. It is no thank for a man to be humbled when the judgment is come upon him; but when we can weep before the judgment is come, it is a sign of faith. Happy were we if faith could make us do that which sense makes wicked men to do. If the believing of the judgment before it come would make us seek unto God, Oh how God would love such a one! This should teach us every one to mourn; and indeed a Christian soul cannot but do it, and that for divers reasons.

1. First, *Because of that sympathy between the Head and the members.* A Christian hath the spirit of Christ, who takes to heart the miseries of the church. Now, can that spirit of Christ be in any, and he not affected as Christ in heaven is affected? Surely no.

2. Again, It must needs be so *in regard of the communion which is between the members of the body.* We are all a part of one mystical body, whereof Christ is the head. What member can he be of this body that doth not take to heart the miseries of the other members? There is want of life where there is no sense of misery.

3. Thirdly, Where there is true grace there will be weeping and mourning for the church, in regard of *the insolency of the church's enemies* and their blasphemous speeches. Where is now their God? their religion? What is now become of their Reformation? What child can hear the reproach and dishonour of God his Father without bowels of compassion?

4. Again, A gracious man will weep in regard of *the danger of not mourning*; for by not mourning we have a kind of guilt lying upon us, for we make the sins and miseries of the church our own, as Paul tells the Corinthians, reproving them for not mourning, 1 Cor. v. 2. Therefore as we are a part of the body, so we must have a part of the shame and grief. Again, God hath promised to mark and single out all those that mourn for the sins of the time; therefore, on the contrary, those that do not mourn are in a dangerous estate, Ezek. ix. 4.

5. Again, We must add *reformation unto lamentation*, else the whole church and commonwealth is in danger. If Achan be not sought out and punished, the whole state is in danger, and lies open to the wrath of God.

For these reasons we ought to take to heart the sins and miseries of the times; for the Spirit of God is in every Christian, that will not suffer him otherwise to be, than to weep and mourn for his own sins, and for the sins and miseries of others.

Use 1. If this be so, what will become of those that take not to heart nor mourn for the miseries of the church? that judge not aright of the poor, but censure the judgment of the afflicted, add affliction to the afflicted and misery to the miserable? What shall we say to those that are so far from helping God, that they help the enemies of God, and are grieved at the heart to hear any cause of comfort on the church's part? whose hearts it doth joy to hear of any overthrow on the church's side? Such false hearts

there are, and many that are glad of the sins of others, thinking thereby to hide their own wicked courses. These men are far from mourning. Let our souls also be far from entering into their secrets.

Use 2. If this be so, that holy men ought to take to heart and weep for the judgments of the commonwealth, both felt and feared, and also for the judgment of God upon the churches abroad, then

Quest. How may we get this weeping and mourning for others? I answer,

Ans. 1. First, *Remove the impediments that hinder*; as, first, a hard and stony heart, which is opposite to tenderness. Josiah had a melting heart, and therefore it was soon dissolved into tears. Our hearts are worse than brass or stone, for workmen can work upon them; but nothing will work upon the hard heart of man. All the judgments in the world will not work upon it; for all the Israelites saw the judgments of God in Egypt, and all his mercies and blessings unto them in the wilderness, yet it would not work upon them, because they had hard hearts. Therefore let us get a good spring of tears, that is, a soft and tender heart, and let us beg it of God, for it is his promise to give us tender hearts; and then there will be an easy expression of it in the outward man.

2. The second, *Let us beware of the love of earthly things, and get a heart truly loving towards God*; for love is compared to fire; and fire, among many other properties it hath, melts the gold, and makes it pliable. Heat is the organ of the soul, whereby it doth anything, and the instrument of nature. So spiritual heat, a warm soul, warmed with the love of God and of our Christian brethren, will make the heart pliable, and melt into tears. Therefore get a loving heart, filled with love to God and Christian brethren, that we may mortify self-love, which dries up the soul. There can be no melting in such a self-loved soul. Let us therefore labour for spiritual love, to cross and subdue carnal self-love. It is this blessed heat that must send forth this heavenly water of tears; it is the spirit of love that must yield this distillation from the broken heart; this works all heavenly affection in us. Therefore Christ compriseth all the commandments under love. And indeed that is all.

3. Thirdly, If we would have our souls fit to grieve, *let us be content to see as much as we can, with our own eyes, the miseries of others*. The best way to weep is to enter into the house of mourning, and set before our eyes the afflictions of others. The very sight of misery is a means to make the soul weep. And let us be willing to hear that which we cannot see; as Nehemiah was content to hear, nay, to inquire, concerning the church abroad; and when he heard that it was not well with them, it made him weep. Every man will cry, What news? But where is the man, when he hears of the news beyond the seas, that sends up sighs to God? prayer, that he would take pity upon his church? It is a good way to use our senses, to help our souls to grieve.

4. Again, *Let us read [of] the estate of God's church*, what it hath been from the beginning of the world; what miseries God's children have endured in former ages by reason of war and the like, that so we may work grief upon our own hearts. We have always matter of grief while we are in this world; if we look abroad, we shall find matter of mourning. And surely we should labour to mourn if we desire to be blessed. For 'blessed are they that mourn: they shall be comforted,' Mat. v. 4.

5. Fifthly, That we may get this weeping and mourning, *let us work this tender affection upon our own hearts*. The soul hath a faculty to work upon

itself. Therefore let us shame ourselves for our own deadness, dryness, and spiritual barrenness this way, that we can yield no sighs, no tears for God, for his church and glory. Let us reason thus with our souls: If I should lose my wife, or child, or my estate, this naughty heart of mine would weep and be grieved; but now there is greater cause of mourning for myself and the church of God, and yet I cannot grieve. Augustine saith he could weep for her that killed herself out of love to him, but he could not weep for his own want of love to God.* We have many that will weep for the loss of friends, wealth, and such like things, but let them lose God's favour, be in such an estate there is but one step between them and hell, they are never grieved nor moved at it. Therefore, seeing they do not weep for themselves, let us weep for them. Can we weep when we see a man hurt in his body, and ought we not much more for the danger of his soul? Therefore let us work this sorrow upon our hearts. Now, we are to receive the sacrament, which is a feast, and therefore must be eaten cheerfully. The passover was a banquet, and therefore to be eaten with joy, but withal it was used to be eaten with sour herbs. So must it be in this blessed banquet which God hath provided for our souls. There must be sorrow as well as joy. It is a mixed action, and therefore it must be eaten with sour herbs, presenting to the eyes of our mind the object of the old Adam; thinking upon the vileness of our nature, that have such filthy speeches, disobedient actions, such rebellious thoughts in us. Great need have I of the mercy and favour of God to look upon such a defiled soul as I am. And also, having in the eyes of our soul Christ crucified, look upon Christ, which is crucified in the sacrament, sacramentally. What was that which broke the body of Christ? Was it not sin? That sin which I so often cherish, this pride, this envy, unbelief, and hypocrisy, this covetousness of mind was that which put Christ into such torment. It was not the nails, but my sins. The sacrament must work upon our hearts so as to work grief in us. We must weep as the people did for Josiah, according as God hath promised we should do. It is said, Zech. xii. 10, 'They shall look on him whom they have pierced by their sins, and weep and mourn for him as one that mourneth for his only son.' So then, the sacrament is not only a matter of joy and thanks, but a matter of sorrow. Therefore, if we would joy in the sacrament, let us first be humbled for sin, and then joy in it afterwards.

Obj. But here it might be objected, Are we not bid for to rejoice always? and always to be thankful? 1 Thes. v. 16. Then how can these agree? for weeping and mourning are contrary to thanksgiving and joy.

Ans. To this I answer, that the estate of a Christian in this life is a mixed estate, both inward and outward; his outward estate and the inward disposition of the soul is mixed. Therefore, having this mixed estate, our carriage must [be] answerable; as we have always cause of mourning and rejoicing both from that in us and from without us, therefore a Christian ought to rejoice always, and in some measure to mourn always. As, for example,

A Christian hath cause of mourning within him when he looks upon his sinful nature and the sins which he doth daily commit, yet notwithstanding, at the same time, there is cause of joy, and great reason to bless God, when he considers that God hath pardoned his sins in Christ. Thus the apostle did, Rom. vii. 24; when he looked upon himself and his own vileness, he cries out, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this

* Augustine on the death of his mother Monica.—G.

body of death !' yet for all this, at the same time he rejoiceth and blesseth God : ' I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord, who hath freed me from the law of sin and of death.' Thus, you see, we have always in respect of ourselves both cause of joy and mourning, therefore we must do both. So have we in like manner continual causes both of joy and sorrow from without us, if we look to the church of God : of joy, in regard there is a God in heaven who hath an eye to his church, who pitieth it and tendereth* it as the apple of his eye ; that takes to heart the afflictions of it ; that will be glorious in the midst of the troubles of his people, by upholding, comforting, and turning all to the best for them ;—of sorrow also, in respect of the miseries under which the church of God doth groan, of which we are bound to take notice, and so to weep with them that weep, Isa. xxii. 12 ; Amos vi. 6 ; Rom. xii. 15. You see the rare mixture of joy and sorrow in a Christian, whereby he is made capable of this great privilege, as neither to be swallowed up of grief, because that his sorrow proceeds from a heart where there is cause of joy, nor to lose himself in excessive joy, because he always sees in himself cause of sorrow. Now, as it is to be seen in other mixtures that there is not at all times an equal quantity or portion of each particular thing to be mingled, but now more of the one, and at another time more of the other, according as the cause doth vary, so is it in this mixture of joy and sorrow for ourselves and for others ; sometimes joy must abound with the causes of it, and sometimes sorrow with its causes doth superabound. It will be worth our inquiry, therefore, to know when to joy most, and when to weep most, which we shall know by God's call in outward occasions, and by the spirit of discretion within us, which will guide us. For God hath given his children a spirit of discretion, that will teach them when to joy and when to weep most. As God calls to mourning now in these times that the church of God is in misery, as he calls for sighs for the afflictions of Joseph, so the spirit of discretion within us doth tell us what to do.

Quest. Yet here may be a question, How shall we know when to cease and leave off mourning ? for the soul is a finite thing, and cannot dwell upon one action always, because it hath many things to do ; and therefore it cannot always mourn nor always rejoice.

Ans. To this I answer, that we have mourned enough, and discharged our duty sufficiently therein, when we have overcome our hearts, and brought them to a temper of mourning, and have complained before God, spread the ill of the times before him, and entreated pity from him, having poured out ourselves in prayer, though short, yet effectual. When we have this done, then we have discharged our duty in mourning, and may turn to other occasions as God doth require of us ; for when we have mourned and wept, then we must look upon causes of rejoicing and thanksgiving. We must always remember so to mourn and weep that yet notwithstanding, looking upon God's blessing upon us both in kingdom, state, and our own particular persons, we may be excited to thankfulness ; for we must not always be sullen, looking upon the evil, but casting our eyes upon the good things we do enjoy, we must provoke ourselves to be thankful. Even as men that have their eyes dazzled will look upon some green colour to recover their sight again, so when we have wrought upon our souls and brought them to mourn, then to help and raise them up, we ought to look upon causes of joy and thankfulness. We have cause of thankfulness when we consider that many churches in France and other places are invaded by enemies,

* That is, ' guardeth.'—G.

oppressed with cruelty, and deprived of liberty, while yet we enjoy the liberty and free passage of the gospel, being freed from the destruction of war and pestilence, which devoureth so many that it makes the land to mourn. He continueth to us liberty to hear the word, and gives us many blessings which others have not. Nay, we have cause to bless God for freeing us from that terriblest judgment of all judgments,—which makes both church and commonwealth to mourn,—because he doth not suffer us to fall into the hands of man, but takes us into his own hand to correct. It is God's infinite mercy that he doth not humble us by our enemies, but takes us into his own hand. Therefore let us not provoke him, lest he give us up to the hands of our merciless enemies, which is a terrible judgment. We had better an hundred times meet him by repentance, and cast ourselves into his hands, for then we have only to deal with a merciful God; but when we are to deal with merciless men that scorn the gospel, then we have both God and them to deal with, which doubles our affection.

Therefore let us mourn, seeing we have cause, for ourselves and the estates of others; but yet let us be thankful, for if we would be more thankful for God's benefits, we should have them longer continued. For, as prayer begs blessings, so thanksgiving continues them. As the best way to obtain good things is prayer and mourning, so the best way to preserve them is thanksgiving and rejoicing. So, then, we have plainly seen that Christians should not always be dumpish and look sourly, but they must as well rejoice and be thankful, as mourn and weep.

Quest. 1. But here, ere I proceed, I must answer some cases of conscience. As, first, What shall we say to those souls that cannot weep for the sins and miseries of the church, and therefore complain for the want of it?

Secondly, What shall we say to that soul that can weep, but more for outward than for spiritual things?

Sol. 1. To the first I answer briefly, that we must not speak friar-like of tears, and never know from whence they come. But when we speak of weeping, we must always understand that tears are no further good than when they spring from sorrow and love within, than when they proceed from inward hatred to sin, and from fear and love to the church of God. If this be in a man, the matter is not much for tears. There may be weeping without true sorrow, as there was in Esau for the blessing, Gen. xxvii. 38; and so the Jews, they could weep and howl upon their beds when there was a famine, yet there was no sound sorrow in them.

And, on the contrary, there may be true sorrow without weeping, yea, and such may it be that there can be no weeping, because their sorrow may be so great that it is rather an astonishment than a weeping. In a fresh wound in the body, at the first there is not such pain felt nor the blood seen, because the part is astonished only; so the soul for a time may be in such an astonishment and grief that there may be no expression of tears. Again, the soul doth follow the temperature of the body. Some are of a more easy constitution to shed tears than others, so that there may be more grief where there are fewest tears.

But to come to the question more directly, we ought to think our estates not so good as they should be, if we cannot at one time or other weep for the sins and miseries of the church. If we can shed tears for outward things at one time or other, and cannot weep for spiritual, it is a bad sign; for certainly, one time or other ordinarily God's children express their sorrow for their sins, and the estate of the church, by tears. They either

have tears for spiritual respects, or else they mourn that they cannot mourn, grieve that they cannot grieve, and desire that they might mourn and that they could weep. They wish with Jeremiah that their head were a fountain of tears, they wish they might have their bodies to answer the intent of their soul, that so they might largely express outwardly their inward grief. As Jeremiah feared he should not have tears enough, therefore wished that his head were a fountain of tears, so they desire, Oh that I could mourn, and that I could weep !

Sol. 2. But what shall we say to those that can weep for other things ? Shall they be condemned for hypocrites ?

1. I answer, No ; for a torrent may run faster for the present than a continual current ; so on the sudden there may be tears and grief for outward things, but yet grief for sin is more because of the continuance thereof. For sin is a continual cause of sorrow. Whereas sorrow for outward things is but on a sudden, as it was in David when he cried, ' Oh my son Absalom, my son Absalom ! ' 2 Sam. xviii. 33. What ado is here on the sudden for Absalom ! but yet he wept for his sins more, because that was a continual grief. So in a Christian, there may be some sudden passion, when he may seem to weep and grieve most for outward things, but yet his grief for sin and the misery of the church is more, because it is a continual grief.

2. Again, Spiritual grief comes from spiritual causes. Tears for sin, and for the church of God, do issue merely from spiritual grounds ; whereas in natural grief for outward things, we have both the Spirit and nature that make us grieve. Now when both these meet together, they carry the soul strongly, as in a stream. So that there must needs be more tears and grief for outward things. As when the windows of heaven were opened from above, and the foundations below were broken up, there must needs follow a great flood, Gen. vii. 11 ; so when we have the Spirit from above, and our nature below, there must of necessity be a great grief for outward things. But yet in these cases, a little of spiritual sorrow is better than a great deal of natural, for spiritual grief fets the soul. As the river Nile runs through Egypt, and fets the land, so this heavenly water of tears and grief fattens the soul, and makes it fit for all holy services. They are both good, but one less than the other. Natural grief is allowable, which if a man have not, he is in a reprobate sense ; for the apostle reckons this up as a great sin, that in the latter days men should be without natural affection. So then we see, that for this reason also there may be a great store of grief and tears for outward things.

3. Again, Let them that grieve that they cannot more grieve, know and comfort themselves, that they have the Spirit of God within them, which is an everlasting spring that will in time overcome all carnal and worldly respects whatsoever, and make the heart in a fit temper of weeping and grieving for spiritual respects.

Use. Well, if this be thus, what shall we think of the jovial people of the world, who are so far from this sorrow, that—when a man shall come and ask them when they wept for their sins, when they did ever mourn and send up sighs to God for their swearing, lying, profanation of God's Sabbath, for the wrong they have done to others, or for any of their sins—the time was never yet wherein they ever shed a tear for sin, or had a sigh, groan, or mourning for sin ? In what estate are we born in ? All children of wrath, and heirs of damnation. But when got you out of this state ? You have ever lived in jollity. Therefore as yet you are as you were born, a child of wrath. Do ye think to reap, and never sow ? to

reap in joy, and never sow in tears? God puts all his children's tears in a bottle; but thou sparest God a labour, because thou never weepst. There are a company that engross all jollity and mirth, as if they had no cause to weep, whose language yet when any man hears, and observes their courses and living in gross sins, he may quickly judge that they of all others have most cause to weep, though there be none more free from mourning, and though they seem to be the only men of the world. But I say to such, go weep, howl, and lament for your sins; for your peace is not yet made with God. Therefore never rest till thou hast got an assurance from heaven that thy sins are forgiven thee. Many people are angry because ministers tell them of this, but surely we must be damned if we do not.

Therefore, as any would hope for comfort, and have God to wipe away their tears from them in another world, let them work upon their hearts here, to shed tears for their own sins first, and then for the sins of the time; for their own first, I say, for a man must first be good in himself before he can be good to others; and then let their grief extend to their brethren even beyond the seas, to the forlorn estate of the church there.

Now the last thing that is noted in Josiah's weeping, is the sincerity of it. 'Thou hast wept *before me*;' that is, sincerely, before God. He sinned before him, and is humbled before him. There is nothing hid from his sight, not only open sins, but he knows the very thoughts of our hearts: therefore let us weep before him without hypocrisy. No matter whether the world see it or no; but let us weep before God, as the prophet saith, Jer. xiii. 17, 'My soul shall weep in secret for you, and mine eyes shall weep, and drop down tears in the night season.' Let us weep in secret before God; for this is without hypocrisy. Now follows the issue of his weeping and humbling of himself.

'I have even heard thee also,' saith the Lord.

In which words is set down *God's gracious acceptance of Josiah's humiliation*; which was not without his special observation. 'For I have even heard thee,' saith the Lord: so that it seems Josiah did utter some words of grief, because God saith, 'I have *heard it*. And we may the rather think so, because usually God's children do in their prayers add words unto their tears, as David and good Hezekiah did. Howsoever then his prayer was not a distinct prayer of a composed tenor of speech; yet it was a prayer, because that with these tears he did send up sighs, and groans, and uttered broken words from a broken heart. There was such a language in his heart that God did understand, for God understands the language of his own Spirit in the hearts of his children. The Spirit knows what we mean, as Rom. viii. 26, 27. God hath an ear to hear our desires, our sighs and groans; for tears have the weight of a voice, they speak for us. Where there is true grief, many times there cannot come a composed tenor of speech; for a broken heart expresseth itself more in sighs, groans, and tears, than in words. Though we do not utter distinct words in a form of prayer, yet he hears our sighs and groans: his ears are open to the cries of his children. So we learn from hence, for our comfort against all Satan's temptations,

Doct. 6. That God takes a particular notice, and understands the prayers we make unto him: he hears the groans of his children. So David saith, 'My groaning is not hid from thee,' Ps. xxxviii. 9. So the prophet says, Ps. clxv. 18, 19, 'He will fulfil the desire of them that hear him; he will also*

* Qu. 'fear?'—ED.

hear their cry, and will save them ;' yea, he knows our thoughts long before. This must needs be so.

Reason 1. First, Because he is gracious and merciful ; he is a God hearing prayers.

2. Because of the relations which in his love he hath taken upon himself, to be a Father. So that when a man shall, by the Spirit of adoption, call God Father, there is such a deal of eloquence and rhetoric in this very word, it works so upon the bowels of God, that he cannot choose but hear. Even as a child, when he speaks to his father, and calls him by this name, this word father doth so work upon him that he cannot but hear. So it is with God ; when he hears us call him Father, he cannot but hear us.

3. Because of his nature and love, which is above the love of an earthly father. Though a mother should forget, and not hear her child, yet the Lord will hear us.

And likewise this is his promise : ' Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will hear thee, and thou shalt glorify me,' Ps. l. 15.

4. Again, God cannot basely esteem of our prayers, because they are the motions of his own Spirit. Oh, but they are broken prayers. It is true ; but the Spirit understands them and makes intercession for us, with sighs and groans that cannot be expressed ; and none can understand them but the Spirit, Rom. viii. 26, 27.

6. Again, God cannot but hear our prayers, because they are offered up in the name of a mediator. They are perfumed with the incense and sacrifice of his Son. Therefore he cannot but hear them.

7. Again, God must needs hear our prayers, because they are made according to his will. When we pray for ourselves, and for the church of God, it is according to God's will. So then, if we consider these respects, God cannot but hear our prayers.

Obj. But some will object, God doth not hear me : I have prayed a long while, and yet he hath not given me an answer.

Ans. 1. I answer, God doth always hear, though he seemeth not to hear sometimes, to increase our importunity. Christ heard the woman of Canaan at first ; but yet, to increase her importunity, he gave her the repulse and denial, and with the same, inward strength to wrestle with him.

Ans. 2. Again, God seems not to hear, because he delights in the music of his children's prayers. Oh how he loves to hear the voice of his children ! As a father to hear the language of his child, though it be none of the best ; so it is sweet music in God's ears to hear the prayers of his children. He will have prayers to be cries. Therefore he defers to hear ; but in deferring he doth not defer, for he increaseth our strength, as in Jacob's wrestling, that we might cry after him, wrestle with him, and offer violence unto him again.

Ans. 3. And sometimes, indeed, he will not hear us, because, it may be, there is some secret Achan in the camp, or some Jonah in the ship ; some sin, I mean, in the heart unrepented of ; for in this case we may come before God again and again, and he not hear us. This is the reason why God hears not many Christians, because they have not made a thorough inquisition into their own estates, found out their sins, and humbled themselves for it. Thus we see for what reasons God defers to hear our prayers.

Use 1. If this be so, that God doth hear us, let us make this use, to be plentiful in prayers, and lay up a great store of them in the bosom of God, for this is that will do us the most good. He hears every one in due time. We do never lose a sigh, a tear, or anything that is good, which proceeds

from his own Spirit, but he will answer abundantly in his own time. For he that gives a desire, and prepares our heart to pray, and gives us a Mediator by whom to offer them up, will doubtless accept of them in his own Son, and will answer them. The time will come when he will accept of nothing else, and we shall have no other thing to offer up. What a comfort will it then be, that we have in former times, and can now call upon God! The day is coming when goods will do us no good, but prayers will. What a comfort then is it to a Christian, that he hath a God to go to, that hears his prayers! Let all the world join together against a Christian, take away all things else and cast him into a dungeon, yet they cannot take away his God from him. What a happiness is it to pray! We can never be miserable so long as we have the Spirit of prayer. Though we were in a dungeon with Jeremiah, or in the whale's belly with Jonah, yea, though in hell, yet there we might have cause of comfort.

Let us therefore be ashamed of our barrenness in this duty, and observe whether God hear our prayers, or else how can we be thankful? There be many that pray, because their consciences do force them to some devotion, and therefore they slubber over a few prayers that their consciences may not smite them, but they never observe the issue of their prayers, whether God hears them or not; whereas God is a God hearing prayers, and the child of God doth esteem of nothing but that which he hath from God, as a fruit of prayer, and therefore accordingly he doth return thanks. God will have his children beg all of him. As some fathers will give nothing to their children, but they will have them first ask it of them, so God will give us nothing but what we pray for. And though he doth exceed to give us more than we ask, yet he looks that we should return thanks in some measure proportionable to the benefit received. Therefore let us observe how God hears our prayers, that so we may be suitably thankful. This will strengthen our faith in evil times when we can thus plead with God. Hear, Lord! Heretofore I came before thee, though weakly, yet with a broken heart, and thou didst hear me then. Thou art still a God hearing prayer, therefore, Lord, look upon my estate now and help me. Seeing, then, God hears our prayers, let us think of this glorious privilege, that we have liberty to go to the throne of grace in all our wants. The whole world is not worth this one privilege. We cannot command the prince's ear at all times; but we have a God always to go to, that will hear us. What a wretched folly is it therefore of those that, by their sins, bring themselves into such a condition that they cannot have God to hear them.

Quest. But how shall we make such prayers as God will hear?

Ans. I answer first of all, Would we be in such an estate that we may enjoy this blessed privilege, to have God's ear ready to hear?

1. First, Then hear him. If we will have God to hear us, then let us hear God, as Josiah did. When he heard the word read, his heart melted. For 'he that turneth away his ears from hearing the law, even his prayers shall be abominable,' saith God, Prov. xxviii. 9.

And is it not good reason, think we, for God not to hear us, when we will not hear him? Prov. i. 24, 25, 'Because I have called, and you have refused; when you are in misery, and shall out of self-love cry to me to be delivered, then I will refuse to hear you,' saith the Lord. Therefore let all profane persons, that will not hear God, know a time will come, that though they cry and roar, yet he will not hear them.

2. Secondly, If we will have God hear our prayers, they must proceed from a broken heart. Prayers be the sacrifice of a broken spirit. Josiah

had a tender and a broken heart, and therefore God could not despise his prayers. So David pleads with God : Ps. li. 17, 'The sacrifice of God is a broken and a contrite spirit.' So holy Bernard saith, 'I have led a life unbefitting me ; but yet my comfort is, that a broken heart and a contrite spirit, Lord, thou wilt not despise.'* God will hear the prayers and tears of relenting hearts.

3. Thirdly, To strengthen our prayers we must add to them the wings of love, faith, hope, and earnestness, as Josiah did here. Out of love to his country his prayers were joined with weeping, and he wrestled with tears. Oh ! the prayers that have tears with them cannot go without a blessing.

4. Lastly, If we would have God to hear us, let us have such a resolution and purpose of reformation as Josiah had ; for his prayers were joined with a purpose of reformation, which he afterwards performed in so strict a manner, that there was never such a reformation among all the kings of Judah as he made. To this purpose David saith, 'If I regard wickedness in my heart, God will not hear my prayer,' Ps. lxxvi. 18. If we have but a resolution to live in any sinful course, let us make as many prayers as we will, God will not respect them. God regarded good Josiah, because he had no purpose to live in any sin against him.

If we come with a traitorous mind unto God, with our sins in our arms, we must look for no acceptation from him. When a man comes to a king to put up a petition unto him, and comes with a dagger in his hand to stab him, will the king accept of this man's petition ? So, do we think that God will hear our prayers when we bring a dagger in our hand, to stab him with our sins ? If we will not leave swearing, lying, pride, covetousness, and the like, if we have not covenanted with our own hearts, but still go on in sin, we shall never go away with a blessing. Josiah reformed himself ; therefore God saith, 'I have also heard thee.' Thus if our prayers issue from a heart rightly affected, as good Josiah's was, then we shall speed as he did ; for God did not only hear his prayer, but see how he rewards him with an excellent blessing ; to be taken home to heaven from the troubles of this life : which we shall in the next place speak of.

* In his Letters very often.—G.