

enfeebled, broken, dispirited, ruined in great part, this ruin shall not rest under my hand." We shall have abundant consolation in our own souls, if we can acquit ourselves that, as to these two things, we lamented the decay and loss, and endeavoured the restitution of them, and therein, as much as in us was, of the Christian interest.

SERMON V.

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HOW OUGHT WE TO BEWAIL THE SINS OF THE PLACES WHERE
WE LIVE?

And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds.)—2 Peter ii. 7, 8.

SECTION I. The apostle (verse 6) recollects the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha, as the ensamples of the punishment that should befall those impure seducers against whom he wrote. By occasion whereof, he mentions God's delivering care of Lot; whose holy carriage being so contrary to the unholy practices of the Sodomites, God made his condition happily different from theirs also; for so saith the text: "He delivered just Lot, vexed," &c.

SECT. II. In the words there are these two distinct parts :—

1. *God's happy delivering of Lot:* He "delivered just Lot."
2. *Lot's holy severity to himself:* for he *was* not only *vexed*, but he *vexed himself*; he "vexed his righteous soul with their unlawful deeds."

The second part is the subject of my ensuing discourse, which presents us with this doctrinal observation:—

DOCTRINE.

It is the disposition and duty of the righteous, to be deeply afflicted with the sins of the places where they live.

In the discussing of which divine and seasonable truth, I shall,

I. Produce those obvious *scripture-examples* that clearly agree with it.

II. Principally show *after what manner* the righteous ought to mourn for the sins of others.

III. Show the *reasons* why it is the disposition and duty of the righteous to be so afflicted and mournful for the sins of others.

IV. Lastly, I shall endeavour to improve the whole by *application*.

SECT. III. I. For the obvious *scripture-examples*.—Our Lord Jesus shall be the first, whose pattern herein amounts to a precept. Christ, saith the text, (Mark iii. 5,) was “grieved for the hardness of their hearts,” namely, in opposing his holy and saving doctrines. David professeth that “rivers of waters ran down his eyes, because men kept not God’s law; “and that when he “beheld the transgressors, he was grieved; because they kept not His word.” (Psalm cxix. 136, 158.) The next example shall be Ezra’s, who, hearing of the sins of the people in marrying with Heathens, in token of bitter grief for it, “rent his garment and his mantle, and plucked off the hair of his beard and of his head, and sat down astonished j “ (Ezra ix. 3 ;) and he did neither “eat bread, nor drink water : for he mourned because of the transgression of them that had been carried away.” (Ezra x. 6.) To these I might add the example of Jeremiah, who tells the wicked, that “if they would not hear, his soul should weep in secret places for their pride ; and his eyes should weep sore, and run down with tears.” (Jer. xiii. 17.) I shall conclude this with that expression of holy Paul: “Many walk, of whom I tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ.” (Phil. iii. 18.)

SECT. IV. II. *The manner* how this duty of mourning for the sins of others is to be performed. This I shall consider in three branches:—

(I.) How we should mourn in respect of *God, before whom we mourn.*

(II.) How we should mourn in respect of *the wicked, for whom we mourn.*

(III.) How we should mourn in respect of *ourselves, who are the mourners.*

(I.) For the first branch, as our mourning respects *God*: it is to be performed with advancing of those perfections of his that relate to those great sins and sinners for which and for whom we mourn. And in our mourning for the sins of others in respect of God, we must advance,

1. His great and unparalleled *patience and long-suffering*, extended toward those whose sins we mourn and lament over. This was evident in Nehemiah’s confessing and bewailing the sins of the sinful Jews. (Neh. ix. 30.) At large he confesseth their sins in that chapter ; but, verses 30, 31, he adds the admiration and acknowledgment of God’s forbearing goodness toward them. “Yet,” saith he, “didst thou forbear them ;” or, (as it is in the Hebrew *רָשָׁע* “protract, defer, prolong over them ;” Ezek. xii. 25,28 ;) yea, “many years didst thou forbear them ;” (Neh. ix. 30 ;) and when the Jews were in their enemies’ hands for their sins, yet, “nevertheless,” saith he, “for thy great mercies’ sake thou didst not utterly consume them, nor forsake them.” (Verse 31.) When we mourn for the sins of our places, we should much admire God’s forbearing goodness, that he defers to punish those sins and sinners which we must not defer to mourn for We should lay man low, but at the same time set-up God high, and

in nothing more than in his patience toward sinners ; patience, to say, infinitely exceeding any ever exercised by man. (1.) All the sins we mourn for are most clearly seen by God and known to him. He sees sin wherever it is, and infinitely more plainly understands all the odious circumstances and aggravations of sin, than *we* can do *that* mourn for them, or than *they* can *that* did commit them. And, (2.) As he sees sin in all its odiousness, so he infinitely more hates it than all the saints and angels in heaven can do, as being the only object of his hatred, all the streams whereof are collected in this one channel; sin being also against his very nature and being, a destroying him in the desire of the sinner, and that which should He in the least measure love, or less than infinitely hate, he would cease to be God. Further admire his patience, (3.) In sparing those that are perfectly in his power to destroy, rebels that are under his feet; yea, lastly, whom in all their rebellions he invites to repentance, yea, feeds, supplies, maintains, daily and richly. Say, then, in thy mourning for the abominations of others, “ How patient art thou in forbearing to punish those sins, which it is my duty with a holy impatience to see and hear !”

2. In mourning for the sins of the wicked, advance God in the acknowledgment of his *justice and spotless righteousness*, should he with utmost severity take vengeance upon offenders. This we shall find also to be the temper of holy Nehemiah in the fore-mentioned chapter ix., verse 33, where, mourning for the sins of the people, he clears and acquits God from any injustice in executing his heaviest severities upon sinners. “ Howbeit,” saith he, “ thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly.” (So Ezra ix. 15; Psalm li.) Say, “Lord, I wonder not at the evils that do, but those that do not, befall us. Were the fire of thy wrath proportioned to the fuel of our sins, we should be utterly consumed. It is thy mercy, Lord, [that] we are not so: thou wouldest be infinitely just and to be justified if we were so.” And,

3. In spreading before God the wickednesses of great sinners, admire his infinite *power*, that can not only stop the worst of men in, but turn them from, their course of opposing God by their rebellions. We are not so to mourn for, as to despair of the conversion of, the worst. They are as much within the converting reach, as the destructive reach, of God’s hand. Say, “ This great sinner whose impieties I bewail, can easily, by thy irresistible grace, which no hard heart can reject, (as was Saul,) be made not only—of a wolf—a sheep, but even a shepherd too. I censure his way, but I dare not determine his end. Thou hast made white paper of as black and filthy dunghill-rags: what cannot the infinite power of God accomplish for the conversion of the greatest sinner ? I now bewail him, Lord; but thou canst also make him more to bewail himself, and make him as zealous in setting-up,- as now he is in destroying, thy people. God can make straight timber of a crooked piece : God can take his garden out of Satan’s waste. O, how glorious would pardoning grace and converting power appear in causing such a change! “

4. In mourning admire that *grace* and power that hath kept thee from their excesses and extravagancies. It should more comfort thee that thou sinnest not with them, than trouble thee that thou sufferest from them.

SECT. V. (II.) The second branch of the manner how we must bewail the sins of others, is as it respects *those for whom and for whose sins we lament and mourn*. You may take-up this in several particulars :—

1. *We must bewail the sins of our bitterest enemies, as well as of our most beloved relations.*—A rare and seldom-practised duty I fear that this will be found. I suppose there is no godly man but bitterly mourns for the impieties of his dear yoke-fellow or child ; but to mourn because a cruel enemy either dishonours God or damns his own soul,—I doubt, there are very few that are conscientious therein. Nothing is more common than to rail at our enemies for their impieties, and to expose them to obloquy and public hatred; but I fear there is nothing more unusual than to bewail their soul- their self-destroying sins, before God in secret. The former, pride and self-love will easily put us upon ; the latter only flows from Christian charity and holy, sanctified zeal and compassion. (Jer. xiii. 17.) To embrace the former and neglect the latter, is to exchange a duty for a sin : a miserable exchange! The holy temper of Christ, and Paul, acted by his Spirit, discovered their bewailings and shedding tears for those that desired to shed their blood. (Luke xix. 41.) Doubtless, such a mourning as this would, if not prevail for the conversion of enemies, yet be a comfortable evidence to our consciences of the truth, yea, the strength, of grace in us, and of pardoning grace bestowed upon us, who discover so high a degree of forgiving our enemies. It is a thousand times more eligible that mine enemies' sins should suffer shipwreck in a sea of my tears, than [that] their persons should be borne down by the stream of my power.

SECT. VI. 2. *We ought to bewail the sins of our near and dear relations in a greater measure than those of mere strangers.*—Natural affection, sanctified, is the strongest. As nature puts forth itself to nearest relations in strong affection, so grace engageth to a proportionable degree of spiritualizing that affection. How earnest and desirous was holy Paul for his “ kinsmen in the flesh,” that “ they might be saved! “ (Rom. x. 1.) Never did a godly man in the world, never durst he, neglect the duty of bewailing the sins of his children. Job offered sacrifices and prayers and tears too, no doubt, for very fear his children might offend God. (Job i. 5.) There is in the saints a spiritual *στοργη*, a “ natural affection “ spiritualized: no godly man knows how to spare any one child of his for the devil; it must needs trouble him to fear that they who are so near in this, should be so distant in the next, life. His soul desires especially soul-mercies for his children. To see them poor in the world, will not so much afflict him as to fear they will never be rich to God. Besides, the sins of those that are nearly related are most frequently presented to our eyes and ears ; they cry nearest us, and therefore they should cry

loudest to us. They are most committed to our care ; and therefore their miscarriages should be the greatest objects of our fear. Near relations may also probably more endanger the residue of those that belong to our family : sin in one or two, though in a large family, may endanger and infect the whole. We most strive to quench those flames that destroy houses near us; we are more fearful of them than of those at a greater distance. A snake in one's bed is more formidable, and a toad there more odious and ugly, than in my field or garden.

SECT. VII. 3. *They that mourn for others' sins, especially the sins of those they most love, must mourn more for their sins than their afflictions and outward troubles.*—They must be more troubled for the poisonous root of sin, than for the branches and fruits of sufferings that spring from the root. We must more mourn for the sin of a child, than for the sickness of a child; more lay to heart what our children have done, than what they have undergone; more for their impiety than for their poverty ; more because they have left God, than because their trades or estates have left them; more for fear [that] they died in sin, than because they died. The troubles of the outward man must not so afflict us, as the unrenewedness of their hearts and natures. To be afflicted for the death of thy child's body, and not for his soul-death in sin, is as if a fond parent should, when his child is drowned, only lament the loss of the child's coat and garment, and not for the loss of the child's person.

SECT. VIII. 4. *We ought to bewail the sins of others according to the proportion of the sins of the times and places where we live.*—When sin grows impudent, and hath a brasen brow ; when it is “ declared as Sodom, and not hidden;” (Isai. iii. 9;) when men are ashamed of nothing but not being impudent in sinning ; (Jer. iii. 3 ;) when sinners cannot “blush,” have lost the very colour of modesty; (Jer. viii. 6, 12;) then is a fit season for God's people, with Ezra, to say, “ We are ashamed and blush to lift-up our faces to thee, our God ;” (Ezra ix. 6 ;) to bewail and blush before God for those sins of which sinners are not ashamed, and for which they have not a tear to shed. Further : when the sinners of the times are obstinate and inflexible in impiety, “ harden their necks, refuse to obey, are disobedient, and rebel, cast the law behind their backs, withdraw the shoulder, and will not hear ;” (Neh. ix. 16, 17, 26, 29 ;) when they make their face “as an adamant stone ; “ when the wicked say, (as Jer. xliv. 16, 17,) “As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee. But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth;” then is the time for the godly to have broken and melted hearts, when the wicked are so obstinate and obdurate. Next: when sin becomes universal; when governors and governed, “ from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head,” are all profane and impious; (Isai. i. 6;) when a man cannot be found in the streets of Jerusalem, that will stand up for God and his interest; (Jer. v. 1 ;) when, as in [the] days of Noah, “ all flesh hath corrupted itself; “ then is the time for all God's people to

mourn before God, and to oppose a holy universality to a profane. Lastly: when not ordinary, but the most horrid and gross, impieties are committed ; as murder, sodomy, perjury, broad-faced adultery; when these mountainous wickednesses are acted, then is the time for the godly to endeavour to overtop these high-towering abominations with a flood of tears.

SECT. IX. 5. *We ought to mourn for the sins of others advantageously to those for whom we mourn- with the using of all due means to reclaim and reduce them.*

(1.) By *prayer* for their conversion, and God's pardoning them. " My heart's desire and prayer to God," saith Paul, " is, that Israel might be saved." (Rom. x. 1.) He tells, Rom. ix. 1, how he bewailed them,—that he had " great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart" for them ; but here, we see, he mingled his tears with prayers for them. We cannot mourn for those for whom we cannot pray ; for, every evil that makes us grieve because of its continuance, we must needs desire may be removed. Though Moses, when he was with the people, maintained the cause of God with the sword ; yet when he was with God, he endeavoured the preservation of the people with prayer. (Exod. xxxii. 11, 27.)

(2.) We must endeavour to follow the mourning for sinners with *restraining* them from sin (if we have it) by power. We must not hate sinners, and suffer them to sin : we destroy those whom we suffer to sin, if we can hinder them. None may permit sin in another, if he can restrain it, but he that can produce a greater good out of it, than the permission is an evil. Restraining of inferiors is as great a duty as prayer for superiors. See it in the case of Eli's negligence to restrain his sons from their impieties.

(3.) We must mourn for sinners with advantaging them by *example*, that they may never be able to tax us with those sins for which we would be thought sorrowful. Examples sometimes have a louder voice than precepts : tears will not in secret drown those sins which public examples encourage ; we confute our tears and prayers before God by an unsuitable example before the offender. The blots of others cannot be wiped off with blurred fingers.

(4.) We must follow our mourning for others' sins, with labouring to advantage them by holy *reproof* for the sins we mourn for. If our place and opportunities allow us, we must not only " sigh for " their sins, but "cry" against them. (Ezek. ix. 4.) Lot was not only a mourner for the Sodomites' sins, but a reproof. I know not whether it be a greater sign of a godly man, to give a reproof duly, or to take a reproof thankfully, (i.) But be sure [that] reproofs be given with *zeal for God's glory*: not either out of hatred to the person reproofed, or out of desire to promote thine own reputation and interest by the reproof. The apostles reproofed idolaters; but zeal for God purely put them upon it. " Paul and Barnabas rent their clothes," as well as reproofed idolaters ; (Acts xiv. 14;) and Paul's " spirit was stirred" with inward zeal, before his tongue stirred against the Athenians. (Acts xvii. 16.) (ii.) Let reproofs be mingled

with *meekness* : passion is seldom prevalent with a sinner. Sweep not God's house with the devil's besom. Let the sinner see thee kind to himself, when thou art most unkind to his sin. (iii.) Let reproofs be qualified with *prudence* : by observing the nature and degree of the offence, and the temper of the offender. A small offence, like a fly on the forehead, is not to be killed with a beetle; * nor is a Venice-glass (and so tender are some tempers) to be scoured with as much strength as we scour an iron pot with. Prudence is also to be observed in reproofs, by care to preserve our own safety, and not to expose ourselves by indiscreet and lavish expressions to the malice of those whom we reprehend, (iv.) Reprove sinners with *patience* : knock twice, nay, thrice, at the door of a sinner's conscience. Importunity may prevail with a sinner for his own soul, if with the unjust judge for another. Wait, if peradventure God may give the sinner repentance.

(5.) With expressing that *commiseration* toward a sinner in private, which thou expressest for him before God in secret. A profane person going once to hear a play, and telling of a godly man whom he met, whither he was going ; this good man entreated him to forbear, and not to go to so wicked a meeting, that might easily endanger his soul. But the man was obstinate ; and notwithstanding all the arguments [that] the good man could use to hinder him from going, he told him he was resolved to go to the play-house. With that the good man shed abundance of tears upon the beholding [of] his obstinacy. They part one from the other: the one, the resolute person, goes toward the play-house ; but just as he was entering into it, the remembrance of the tears shed by the godly dissuader so wrought upon him that he durst not adventure to go into that hurtful place, but returned from it without incurring the danger of that temptation.

SECT. X. 6. *We must mourn for those sins of others that are in appearance advantageous to ourselves.*—Though a sin may bring us profit or honour, yet it must bring us no pleasure, if it bring God dishonour, and the sinner destruction. It is very observable in Paul and Barnabas, that they “ rent their clothes” (the usual sign of mourning) for a sin that did cast the greatest honour imaginable upon them, that attributed a divinity to them, by doing sacrifice to them. (Acts xiv. 13, 14.) We must never endure the advancement of our interest by the diminution of God's glory through sin. As God will not give his glory to another, so, God not giving it, we must not dare to take it. That he may be advanced, we must be willing to be debased and depressed. We should not desire any glory that promotes not his, nor should we shun any disgrace that sets up his honour. All our glory and gain are unprofitable to us, that further not the end why we had our beings. Nothing done to a tree is profitable to it, which makes it not more fruitful. Though its leaves be gilded, though its branches should have pearls and diamonds hung thick upon them, though the body be adorned with satins and cloth

* Sometimes written *boyle*; “a very large wooden mallet,” used for driving-in wedges and piles; and, in times more modern, “a sledge-hammer.”—EDIT.

of gold, yet this makes not the tree better as a fruit-tree. It would be better for the tree, to dung it, than to adorn it; to cut its bark, than to beautify its body. We should embrace the vilest debasures, and the most torn and poor condition, if they conduce to our end,—the glorifying of God; rather than, by any one's sin, to shine and be advanced in the -world. It was an excellent option of that ingenious writer Nierembergicus to this purpose : “ I had rather, Lord, could it be without sin, that all should hate me, than that they should love me for myself: for if all should hate me, I should have but what is mine; if they should love me for myself, I should usurp what is thine.”* Besides, we purchase any temporal benefit at too dear a rate, if it be with the loss of an eternal soul, that sins to obtain it for us. If David “ poured out the water unto the Lord, and would not drink thereof,” because it was brought with the “jeopardy of the lives” of the bringers ; (2 Sam. xxiii. 16, 17 ;) how far should we be from delighting in those gains that are obtained by endangering the souls of those that procure them for us! A factor, an apprentice, by whose sin thou gainest, should more grieve thee, than if by his weakness thou hadst been never so great a loser.

SECT. XI. (III.) I shall consider how we should mourn for the sins of others, in respect of *ourselves*.

1. *They whom God hath set in any place or station of superiority over others, either more public or in families, should be the most eminent mourners for the sins of those committed to their charge.*—Persons who have public relations, must have public affections.—They have greater opportunities and authority to advance God's glory and benefit souls, than their inferiors have : to them “ much is given, and of them much shall be required.” They are more responsible to God for public abuses than the common people: the heads of places and people are more concerned to reform than private members. If they lay not the sins of inferiors to their hearts, they shall be laid to their charge. One great, if not the greatest, reason why England is so full of ungodliness, is because it is so full of Gallios, who regard “ none of those things.” (Acts xviii. 17.) Now they who resent *f* no sin, will reform no sinners. All must give account for their idle words, and governors, especially magistrates and ministers, for their idle silence. Superiors will not reform those sinners publicly, for whom they do not mourn privately. How abominable is it for base bribery or face-fearing to deter governors from reforming ! It is as cruel to spare all as to spare none. Solomon's throne was not held up by apes, but by lions. *Tenuisse silentia clerum*: it is the basest tenure in the world, “ for a minister to hold his living by holding of his peace.” Luther once said, that sinful silence in a minister was *peccatum irremissibile*, “an unpardonable fault.” That blessed man, Mr. Samuel Hieron, † mourned upon his death-bed for his defectiveness in the duty of private reproof; though, blessed saint! he knew upon whom to lay that and his other sins. I do not doubt but God makes the world so

* *De Adoratione*, lib. iv. cap. 11. † In the meaning of “feeling acutely on account of.” See the note in vol. i. p. 483.—EDIT. ‡ See his Life in his Works,

bitter to us by sufferings, because we make their sins no bitterer to them by reproofs. A minister and magistrate in love and Christian condescension ought to be *flexibiliores arundine*, but in opposing of sin *duriores adamant*; in the former “as flexible as a reed,” in the latter “harder than an adamant.” (Joel ii. 17; 2 Cor. xi. 29; Heb. xiii. 17.)

SECT. XII. 2. *Those who, now converted, have been the most open sinners in their unconverted state, should more lay to heart the sins of the openly wicked, than those who have lived more civilly and without scandal.*—The greatest sinners, converted, should have the greatest compassion: they who have obtained most, should show most, mercy. “Ye know,” saith God, “the heart of a stranger;” (Exod. xxiii. 9;) and therefore they are enjoined to be kind to strangers. Great sinners, converted, know the addictedness of an unconverted man’s heart to his corruptions. They have tasted most of the bitterness of sin, and of the sweetness of pardoning mercy. They know most of “the terror of the Lord,” and therefore they should be most in persuading of and sorrowing for sinners. (2 Cor. v. 11.) Paul, so eminent in sin, was as famous for compassion to sinners: the “overtaken in a fault,” he wills, should be gently set in joint with “the spirit of meekness.” (Gal. vi. 1.) He could not speak of sinners without weeping: (Phil. iii. 18;) he had “great heaviness and sorrow of heart” for his unconverted brethren. (Rom. ix. 2.) “Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?” (2 Cor. xi. 29.) He commends meekness toward sinners upon this very ground: “For we,” saith he, “ourselves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.” (Titus iii. 3.)

SECT. XIII. 3. *They that mourn for others’ sins must more mourn because those sins are offensive and dishonourable to God and hurtful to sinners, than because they are injurious to themselves that mourn ever them.*—To mourn for sins of the times because hurtful to us, is not zeal for God or charity to sinners, but self-love. Godly sorrow is when we sorrow for sin as against God: all sorrow for ourselves and our worldly interest is but worldly sorrow; and *dedolendus est iste dolor*, “it is to be repented of,” when it puts the other out of place. We frequently mourn for the miscarriages of the times, but more as they are afflictive than sinful,—because *we* suffer, rather than because God’s honour or souls suffer. If we were not ourselves concerned in the suffering of our worldly interest, few would hear of our mourning. The complaint of, “What wilt thou do to thy great Name?” is much rarer than, “What shall become of my family, my estate?” The precious water of our tears is not to be cast upon such dunghills, into such sinks: sin brought-in tears, and they should be principally shed for sin. It is observed by some, that God, who in times of public mourning for sin commands baldness, forbids it for worldly troubles. (Isai. xxii. 12; Lev. xxi. 5.)

SECT. XIV. 4. *They that mourn for others’ sins, should mourn more in secret than in open complaining.* — Thus Jeremy: “I will mourn in secret places for your pride.” (Jer. xiii. 17.) “Our

Father," saith Christ, " seeth in secret, though he recompenseth openly." (Matt. vi. 18.) Public exercises of religion may gain most applause, and be most advantageous to observers; but they testify not so much sincerity to the conscience, as those in secret. He mourns most truly that hath no other -witness thereof but the all-seeing God. Fasting, and so mourning, is feasting and rejoicing to one that eyes only the eye of man in these services, when men observe them. Our Saviour forbids " appearing unto men to fast," by putting on a wreathed,* grim, sour countenance, a louring look; (Matt. vi. 16;) not that he forbids open expressions of sorrow used by saints of old, but the counterfeit semblance of sorrow, to make an ostentation of sanctimony to be noted by men. Nor doth Christ here tax mourners for seeming to fast, when they did not; but for desiring to be known abroad to fast, when they fasted in private. It is a Jehu's zeal which may be " seen" only, and desires to be so. (2 Kings x. 16.)

SECT. XV. 5. They that mourn for others' sins, must mourn *to a high degree, who have been the occasions, furtherers, and promoters of their sins.*—Either by neglecting to reprove them for, restraining them from, or giving them examples of, sinning. *This* sanctified conscience will make one of the bitterest ingredients into sorrow for the sins of others. It was the trouble of David, that he had occasioned the death of the priests by receiving relief from Ahimelech. " I have occasioned the death," said David to Abiathar, " of all the persons of thy father's house." (1 Sam. xxii. 22.) I doubt not but some whom God hath converted may say, " Lord, I have, some way or other, furthered the sins of this or that great offender." If so, what canst thou do less than drop the balsam of thy tears into his wounds of sin / Though God hath pardoned the sin to thee, and lays it not to thy charge, holy compassion should put thee upon laying it to thy heart: this undoubtedly is a due piece of spiritual restitution of what thou hast wronged him of. Canst thou do less than beg with tears and sobs, that God would be more merciful to his soul than thou hast been ? Canst thou do less than with a holy ingenuity endeavour to bring him home to that God from whom thou taughtest him to wander ?

SECT. XVI. 6. They that mourn for the sins of others, must mourn *with a holy reflection upon themselves.*—And that in these three particulars:—

(1.) They must reflect upon themselves *with sorrow*, because they have the same impure natures that the most-to-be-lamented sinner in the world hath. The holiest in the world may say, " Lord, this most extravagant sinner speaks but the sense of my nature. My nature answers his, as face answers face in the glass." But of this before.

(2.) *With a reflection of examination.*

(i.) *Whether you have not some way or other furthered this sinner in his much-to-be-lamented impieties.*—Either by not endeavouring to

* This word seems to be used here in the signification of "wrinkled," or, according to Home Tooke, as " writhed." But if regarded as an offshoot from *wrath*, derived from *wrede*, it will then mean " an irritated countenance."—EDIT.

hinder him from sin so much as you might, or by prompting him to it more than you ought. If so, how deeply this is to be resented, you heard before.

(ii.) *Whether the same open sins that are acted by him—the noted offender, or sins almost or altogether as bad, are not acted and entertained by thee in secret places, or at least in thy heart.—* Are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God ? “ (2 Chron. xxviii. 10.) If so, doubtless it is thy duty to cast the first stone at thyself; and, as Christ said to the daughters of Jerusalem, to weep first under the sense of thy own unholiness; and to remember, though thy sins are not so infamous as those of a public sinner, yet, by being secret, they may be sins of greater danger. And that, First, By occasioning hypocrisy, in contenting thyself with visible appearances of holiness, and freedom from open impieties. Secondly. Thy secret sins may be more dangerous, in regard [that] by their secrecy thou shalt not be so happy as to meet a reprov-er.* The loudly snorting sinner every one will be ready to jog with a reprehension; whilst thou that sinnest silently in secret, shalt be freed from any wholesome molestation by holy reprehension. He that would be watchful wants either a severe censurer or a faithful reprov-er. Thirdly. Thy secret sins are not so likely to trouble and awaken thy drowsy conscience, the sins of public offenders having oft been the occasion to make people both ashamed of sin and afraid of vengeance.

(3.) *With a reflection of care and watchfulness.—*That thou mayest never dare to fall into the sins that thou bewailest in another; and that thou mayest never admit a temptation to a sin in thyself, which is the object of thy lamentation in another; that thou who labourest to quench the fire that hath seized upon thy neighbour’s house, mayest be careful to preserve thine from being set on fire also: to conclude ; that thou mayest not dare to do that which doth or should grieve thee to see another do.

SECT. XVII. III. To show *why* this holy mourning is, 1. *The disposition* and, 2. *Duty* of the righteous, I shall express the reasons of both distinctly.

1. It is their *disposition*; and that under a threefold qualification :—

(1.) Because they are a *knowing* people.—They know what tears and heart-breakings sin hath stood them in; they know that sin will cost the wicked either tears of repentance, or damnation ; they know that sin is but gilded destruction, and fire and brimstone in a disguise. “ Knowing the terror of the Lord,” saith Paul, “ we persuade men.” (2 Cor. v. 11.) It is as true, we mourn for men that will not be persuaded. In one word : the godly know that, when the wicked sin, “ they know not what they do.” The word, threatening sin, makes woe as present to a knowing saint’s faith, as the evil threatened can in its execution be present to a sinner’s sense. To

* *Facile accedit tentator, ubi non timetur reprehensor.* “ Where no fear of a reprov-er is entertained, there the tempter has ready access.”—EDIT.

a saint's eye, sinning is but the seed's time of wrath, and eternal vengeance in the root. But principally the godly know what sin hath cost Christ; not tears of water only, but great and many drops of blood.

SECT. XVIII. (2.) As to a saint's disposition: he is *compassionate and tender-hearted*.—If sinners mourn, he mourns *with* them; if not, he mourns *for* them. The wicked are more the objects of his pity than anger. The saints only have “bowels,” (Col. iii. 12,) and “Christ's bowels.” (Phil. i. 8.) The wicked, as the high priests were to Judas, are hard-hearted in drawing to sin, and in leaving those whom they have drawn into it. Good men are full of tears: see it in David, Ezra, Joseph, Josiah, Jeremiah. *Quantò quisque sanctior, tantò fletus uberior* : “The more holy, the more plentiful are our tears.” Saints have received, and return, compassion: grace kills not, but only cleanseth, affection.

SECT. XIX. (3.) The righteous are a *purified, sanctified people*.—A saint, as such, hates nothing but sin. Grace ever conflicts with sin where it sees it; either in a man's own soul, or in the life of another: holiness contends with sin, where it cannot conquer it. Now, where an object is truly hated, it ever causeth sorrow till it be removed. Further: every sanctified soul labours to keep itself holy. Now sorrow for sin puts us upon “carefulness” to avoid it; (2 Cor. vii. 11;) all take heed of that which occasions their grief.

SECT. XX. 2. It is the *duty* as well as the disposition of the righteous, to mourn for the sins of others; and that as they are considerable in a threefold relation :—

(1.) In their relation to *God*: they are his “sons.” As “the sons of God,” they are commanded to be “blameless, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation.” (Phil. ii. 15.) This relation of sonship doth as truly make us mourn for the sins of others, as it engageth us to avoid sin in ourselves. It suffers us not to put up [with] dishonour offered to God our Father with sinful patience : it makes us quietly to bear our private troubles, but not quietly to suffer the sufferings of God's name. Though Moses, when with God, prayed for the people ; yet, when with the people, he vindicated the honour of God with the sword. (Exod. xxxii. 11, 27.) Though Job, when a sufferer from God, was holily patient; yet, when a hearer of the counsel of his wife to curse God, he was as holily impatient. (Job ii. 10.) A son of God cannot bear the abuses offered to his Father: saints can no more endure the dishonour done to their heavenly Father, according to that measure of grace given unto them, than the angels who are in heaven do according unto theirs. “Jesus wept” for Lazarus's death, because his friend; and should not we much more weep for God's dishonour, because our Father ? God's glory should be dearer to us than our lives : he that toucheth it, should touch the apple of our eye; and that soon makes it water.

SECT. XXI. (2.) Their relation to *the Mediator*, the Lord Christ. Here I shall mention only a double relation between Christ and saints, that engageth them to mourn for the sins of others.

(i.) The first is his relation to us as a *suffering Surety*, in respect whereof he sustained and paid the debt of penalty which we owed to God's justice ; for it was sin in man that made Christ " a man of sorrows." Saints have but one Friend, and He but one enemy; how then is it possible that that enemy, when seen, should not be the object of sorrow ? Sin drew not from our dear Lord Jesus's eyes only tears of water, but from his sacred face great drops of blood ; it was sin that pierced not his feet, hands, and side only, but his soul. Who can look upon the bloody knife that stabbed Christ, without some sorrow ?

(ii.) There is a second relation between Christ and saints, that should, make them mourn for the sins of the wicked ; and that is the relation of *Teacher and Instructor*. We are his disciples and scholars ; and it is our duty as much to make him our Example, as to expect he should obtain our pardon. Christ never had a pollution, but oft a commotion, of affection; Christ never wept but for sin or its effects. How full of zeal was he for his Father, when he saw his glory blemished, his house defiled! Did it not, after a sort, " eat him up," and consume him ? (John ii. 17.) " The reproaches of them that reproached God fell upon Christ." (Rom, xv. 3.) It is observable, [that] though Christ in his own cause gave Pilate no answer, but stood silent; yet when he heard Pilate arrogate to himself the power of life and death over Christ, he could not forbear to show Pilate his sin, by telling him of a higher power than his, from whence his was derived. (John xix. 9—11.) How full of grief was Christ, seeing the hardness of the Jews' hearts to their own destruction ! (Mark iii. 5.) In his approach to Jerusalem, filled with enemies to God and him, he " wept over it" for their blindness and impieties and approaching destruction : (Luke xix. 41 :) he bewailed the sins of those that rejoiced in them, and shed his tears for those that thirsted to shed his blood. Either resemble Christ, or lay-off the name of Christian.

SECT. XXII. (3.) Their relation to *the wicked*, for whose sins they should mourn.

(i.) The saints are men with the worst; they have the relation of *human nature* to the greatest sinners upon earth : they are *ex eodem luto formati* [" formed of the same clay "] ; " in the body," as the apostle expresseth it. (Heb. xiii. 3.) It is a wickedness to hide ourselves from our own flesh. (Isai. lviii. 7.) Humanity in respect of common nature, should cause humanity in regard of affection. To see man's nature so depraved, that was once so beautiful; so like the devil, that once so much resembled God ; so swiftly running to hell, that was once a heir of heaven;—should draw forth pity, unless our hearts be flint and marble. A man's beast deserves thy pity, much more his soul.

SECT. XXIII. (ii.) The righteous are the same with the wicked in respect of *corrupt, depraved nature*; born in sin as much as they, with a principle of inclination to all their impieties. (Eph. ii. 3.) Saints by nature grew upon the same root, flowed from the same fountain, were stones digged out of the same quarry. Should it not

then, make thee mourn, to consider, by the wickedness of others, thine own inbred depravation ? what thou hadst done thyself, if God had not either renewed or restrained thee ? yea, what thou wouldest do, if God should leave thee, and withdraw his grace from thee ? What are all the visible impieties in the world, but comments and expositions upon thy depraved nature ? “ This drunkard, adulterer, sodomite, murderer, and I,” say, “ Lord, were both cut off from the same piece, and only free grace came between us.” If it have made thee white paper, thou wert by nature as very a dunghill-rag as the filthiest sinner.

SECT. XXIV. (iii.) Perhaps the holiest men have been, some way or other, *furtherers of the sins* of the wicked among whom they live ; perhaps by their former sinful example, when they lived in the same sins themselves which now the wicked wallow in. It is very possible that one that shall be saved, may have been the cause of another’s damnation. Shouldest not thou, then, mourn for killing that soul which God so severely punisheth, though free grace hath pardoned thee ? Should we not quench that fire with our tears, which we have blown-up with our bellows of encouragement? Saints that are to mourn for others’ sins, possibly have suffered sin in others, when they might have restrained them. We destroy all those whom we suffer to sin and perish, when we can prevent it. May there not be some Elis among godly men, who have too negligently reprovèd and animadverted upon the sins of those under their charge ? It is possible to be a good man, and yet a bad magistrate, minister, parent, by not restraining the sins of those committed to us. Cold reprovers cause bold sinners: an idle silence may sometimes be more pernicious than idle, yea, profane, words.

SECT. XXV. (iv.) In this relation of saints to sinners that should put them upon mourning for them, it is very considerable, that the godly and the wicked make-up *one community, or political body*, in the places where they live. In which respect, the sins of some particular offender or offenders may pull down judgments upon the whole body or lump of persons that abide where those offenders live. So that every one had need do his utmost, by mourning, and in whatever other way he can, to redress the sins, and so to prevent the plagues, of the place where he lives. It is very evident, from Deut. xxi. 1—9, [that] the blood of one man murdered defiles the whole bordering land, and provokes the Lord’s displeasure against a people, even all the place, where one notorious wickedness is committed. The sin of making the golden calf, though it was not the sin of all, yet it endangered all. The altar built by the two tribes and a half, which the rest of the tribes thought had been built for sacrifice, was thought by Phinehas to be so great a provocation, as that for it the Lord would “be wroth with the whole congregation of Israel.” (Joshua xxii. 18.) For the villany by some of the inhabitants of Gibeah committed, in abusing the Levite’s concubine, the vengeance came not only upon the city where it was committed, but upon all the tribe of Benjamin. (Judges xx. 46.) Achan’s sin troubled all Israel: (Joshua vii. 12:) there

came a famine upon Israel for three years together, for the sin of Saul in killing the Gibeonites contrary to his fidelity. (2 Sam. xxi. 1.) This was the chief cause of the custom, which was at the public fasts in Israel, for the finding out of notorious offenders and offences, to have vengeance taken on them openly. Hence was the pretence of Jezebel for the killing of Naboth, under a show of execution of justice against a blasphemer, to pacify God's anger. (1 Kings xxi. 9, 10.) By all this it is evident, what just cause the godly have to mourn for all the abominations committed among them, which else may pull down divine vengeance upon them.

SECT. XXVI. IV. *Application.*

USE I. OF INFORMATION in sundry branches.

1. *Godliness is uniform in all times, places, and companies.*—Saints, in the worst of these, keep-up their integrity, and are so far from joining with sinners in their sins, that they, by lamenting their sins before the Lord, enter their protestation against them. A righteous man is not, as the swine in a meadow, clean only in clean places; he will maintain opposition to sin in the midst of inducements to sin. Lot did so in Sodom. *His* goodness may justly be suspected that only shows itself in good places, companies, and times.

SECT. XXVII. 2. *The greatest sinners cannot constrain us to sin.*—They cannot extort our consent to sin. Sodom could not, though never so filthy, make Lot so. No external inducement can take from a godly man either his peace or purity. Men may constrain thee to be poor, not impure : the worst creatures either among men or devils cannot take away what is best. The greatest temptation is no plea for committing the least sin : if we give not away, none can take away, our holiness.

SECT. XXVIII. 3. *One cause may produce contrary effects.*—Others' sins draw the wicked to follow them; but they put the saints upon bewailing them. The coming of the angels into Sodom stirs-up in Lot a desire to exercise hospitality in the entertaining [of] them; but it stirs-up in the impure Sodomites the heat of lust and the most horrid uncleanness. That which sets the graces of saints on work, puts the wicked upon acts of impiety: a godly man is drawn nearer to God by that very thing that drives the wicked farther from God. It is the disposition of the person that makes what befalls him good or bad. David's beautiful house of cedar puts him upon setting-up God's house: Nebuchadnezzar's palace puts him upon thoughts of haughtiness and proud self-admiration.

SECT. XXIX. 4. *It is our duty to rejoice in the holiness, if to mourn for the sins, of others.*—Love to God's house in others was David's gladness. (Psalm cxxii. 1.) It was the greatest joy of holy John that his spiritual "children walked in the truth." (3 John 4.) Holy ones were Paul's "joy, crown, and glory." (1 Thess. ii. 19, 20.) This rejoicing in the grace of others must be, though their grace outshines and eclipseth ours : they who have but a little grace themselves, must rejoice that others have and act more than they. The preaching

of Christ by those that envied, made Paul joyful: (Phil. i. 18:) it should please us, though another can do more service to God than ourselves.

SECT. XXX. 5. *Christianity abolisheth not affection, but rectifies it.*—It dries not up the streams of sorrow, joy, hatred, &c, but only turns them into the right channel; it removes not away their being, but their ill-being. Religion *non mactat, sed sanctificat*; it “slays not, but sanctifies,” affections; it doth not *unman* a man, but only *undevil* him. Grace is like the percolation or draining of salt water through the earth; it only takes away the brackishness and unsavouriness of our affections and faculties. It kills not Isaac, but the ram: it doth not break, but only tune, the string of nature. *Non tollit, sed attollit*: “It destroys not, but advanceth,” nature. When you are godly, you have more innocent humanity than ever: you may exercise human affections and actions as much as you can desire, only not to damn yourselves. You may eat, though not be gluttons; drink, though not be drunk; buy and sell, so as you make not sale of a good conscience. Grace gives leave to every thing beside damning your souls.

SECT. XXXI. 6. *Every thing betters a saint.*—Not only ordinances, word, sacraments, holy society, but even sinners and their very sinning. Even these draw forth their graces into exercise, and put them upon godly, broken-hearted mourning. A saint sails with every wind: as the wicked are hurt by the best things, so the godly are bettered by the worst. Because “they have made void thy law, therefore do I love thy commandments.” (Psalm cxix. 126, 127.) Holiness is the more owned by the godly, the more the world despiseth it. The most eminent saints were those of Caesar’s (Nero’s) house: (Phil. iv. 22 :) they who kept God’s name, were they that lived where Satan’s throne was. (Rev. ii. 13.) Zeal for God grows the hotter by opposition; and thereby the godly most labour to give the glory of God reparation. Lime, by casting water upon it, grows inflamed; and opposition confirms the upright Christian in holiness; winds make the trees more firmly rooted. It was said of old, *Grave bonum a Nerone damnari*: “The best action saints account *that* which is opposed by the worst men.” Elijah’s jealousy for religion was the more kindled by its being opposed by idolaters: (1 Kings xix. 14 :) Lot showed himself a better man in Sodom than in the cave. (Gen. xix. 30.)

SECT. XXXII. 7. *The great misery [that] sin hath brought into the world, to make sorrow and mourning necessary.*—Could we live so holily (as we cannot) as not to see cause of trouble from ourselves, we must be troubled by observing others: ever since the coming-in of sin, sorrow is become a duty. What is [it] to live long in the world, but to be mournful and afflicted long? It should make us long for a better world, where that which is here our duty to practise, shall for ever be our privilege to be freed from. And,

SECT. XXXIII. 8. *There must needs remain a better state for the saints.*—Surely, though here sorrow, yea, *because* sorrow is here their

duty, it must not always last, here and hereafter too, in both worlds; for then their condition in this regard would be worse than that of the wicked, who have their “good things” here.

SECT, XXXIV. 9. *How ought sinners to mourn for their own sins!*—The nearer the enemy is, the more dreadful he is. Nothing more dismal than to see a sinner to go, not swiftly only, but merrily, to eternal mourning. *Maxime gemendus, qui non gemit:* “He that hath no tears for himself, should be helped by ours.”

SECT. XXXV. USE II. The second use is OF REPREHENSION ; and that to sundry sorts :—

I. *To those that reproach the holy mourning of saints for others’ sins.*—They count it at the best but melancholy mopishness. First they cause them to mourn, and then they deride them for mourning; like some that beat a person till he cries, and then they beat him for crying. It is better to be a mourner for sin, than a mocker for mourning. Some account mourning for public sins a sign of disaffection to the public government; as Jeremy, who mourned for the sins of his time, was charged to be an enemy to the state. *They* are not to be accounted the troublers of Israel, *who* are the only persons troubled for the cause of Israel’s troubles. *They* are falsely esteemed the incendiaries in a state, *whose* great study is to quench God’s burning wrath. If sinners kindle the fire, let saints quench it.

SECT, XXXVI. 2. This doctrine of mourning for the sins of others,, speaks reproof *to those that take pleasure in the sins of others.* (Rom. i. 32.)—I fear there are many who would be glad were sin more common, that there might be none to make them ashamed of sin; that “delight in the frowardness of the wicked ;” (Prov. ii. 14 ;) that recreate themselves with others’ sins ; that say of sinners, as the Philistines of blind Samson, “Let them come and make us sport by sinning;” that cannot be merry, unless a sinner be in their company: “Fools make a mock at sin.” (Prov. xiv. 9.) Some have observed, that, among all Solomon’s delights, he never had a fool to make him merry. Of all fools, sinners are the greatest, but especially they that are delighted with the sinful follies of others. To be delighted with the holiness of others, is a good sign; but to be delighted with the sins of others, is a black mark. Holy David was of a contrary temper : “Depart,” saith he, “from me, all ye workers of iniquity.” (Psalm vi. 8 ; cxix. 115.) No wicked man’s company is to be desired, unless to do him good. We should not be with the wicked as companions, but physicians. The wicked’s good-fellowship will have a bad conclusion.

SECT, XXXVII. 3. This doctrine reproves *those that mourn for the holiness of others.*—Who are troubled when they see a child or yoke-fellow holier than themselves. These are most afraid’ where no fear is,—that a man can be too fearful of sin ! It is sad, that a precise Turk or Papist should “be honoured for their silly, self-contrived preciseness and fopperies, and that a saint should be derided for real sanctity. I have known some parents that have greatly desired [that] their children should be good husbands, to get and increase their estates ; but then have been very fearful lest they should be too godly:

and it hath been the righteous judgment of God, that their children proved spendthrifts ; neither godly, nor good husbands. It is often seen that, as gardeners with their shears snip off the tops of the tallest sprigs, so men most labour to discountenance the tallest in "Christianity.

SECT, XXXVIII. 4. This doctrine reproves *those that put others upon SJM.*—So far are they from mourning for their sins. Poor souls ! have they not sins enough of their own to answer for ? Must they needs contract to themselves the guilt of others' sins also? How many, instead of being burning coals to inflame others with love to God, are blacking coals to defile others with sin! They are not willing to go to hell alone. It is little enough to be a leader to heaven, but too much to be a follower to hell; what, then, to be a leader!

SECT, XXXIX. USE III. OF EXHORTATION, to mourn for the sins of the wicked among whom we live.

I. If we mourn not for others' sins, theirs become ours.—We are justly to be accounted approvers of others' sins, if we enter not this protestation of mourning against them. If sin be not laid to thy heart, thou knowing it, it will in some degree be laid to thy charge. When the Corinthians mourned for the sin committed among them, the apostle pronounced them "clear in this matter." (2 Cor. vii. 11.) Their hatred of it did not clear them, till followed with mourning for it.

SECT. XL. 2. *Mourning for others' sins is the way to awaken thy conscience for thine own former sins.*—It will mind thee what thou hast done in thy former unconverted state. It will bring to remembrance (as Paul speaks, Titus iii. 3) what thou didst in times past, and cause a fresh bleeding in thy soul for sin.

SECT. XLI. 3. *Without mourning for sinners, you will never seek the reformation of sinners.*—The greatest mourners have been the greatest reformers: see it in Nehemiah, Ezra, David. (Neh. ix. 16 ; Ezra ix. 7 ; x. 6.) We only seek to redress what is burdensome. If reformation be our joy, sin to be reformed will be our sorrow : all mourners will desire to remove the cause of their mourning. Private sorrow increaseth public care.

SECT. XLII. 4. *This mourning for others' sins will make us more fearful to admit sin into ourselves.*—It will keep us at a greater distance from temptation to sin,—the best way to keep us from infection by sin. Who will dare to do that which he grieves to see another do ! He that is afraid of a plague-sore upon another, will fear it should come upon himself.

SECT, XLIII. 5. *Mourning for others' sins speaks thee a man of public usefulness to thy country.*—That thou hast a holy care of it; that thou art to be reckoned among the chariots and horsemen of it, and a pillar of thy nation, a defender of it, and one that stands in the gap to prevent the incursion of what would destroy it; that in a public conflagration thou hadst rather bring thy bucket of tears, than take thy sleep. A public spirit is only truly noble.

SECT. XLIV. 6. *Mourning for others' sins makes the sins of others beneficial to thee.*—Instead of infecting thee by sinful example, it stirs up thy graces of zeal, compassion, and holy charity. It speaks thee like to Christ, who had a commotion, without pollution, of affection; that thou hast a heart like a garden of roses, or a well of rose-water, which, the mere blown upon and stirred, smell the more delightfully. For this,

SECT. XLV. 7. *Holy commotion of soul for others' sins sends forth a most acceptable and fragrant savour into the nostrils of God.*—It speaks thee marked out for mercy. God bottles thy tears : he likes it that thou art good in bad times, and highly approves our mourning for them. He will shortly wipe all these tears from thine eyes ; and bring thee to that state, where thou shalt have neither sin in thy soul, nor sinner in thy society ; where thou shalt be freed from the power and presence of both ; in one word, where thou shalt find that thou, who didst contend in secret, hast prevailed openly.

SECT. XI/VT. USE IV. I shall add, though but name, one use more ; and that is DIRECTION to the means of practising this duty of holy mourning for others' sins : 1. *Look not upon this duty with self-exemption.*—As if it belonged only to the highest in the practice of religion, or persons in office. The whole church of Corinth were bound to mourn for that great sin among them. (1 Cor. v. 2.) All desire to be marked, and therefore should be mourners. (Ezek. ix. 4.) 2. *Look upon mourning for sin to be no legal practice, but an evangelical duty.*—The gospel-grace makes tears sweeter, not fewer. 3. *Preserve tenderness of conscience in respect of thine own sins.* 4. *Strengthen faith in divine threatenings against sin.* 5. *Be holily, not curiously, inquisitive into the state of the times.* 6. Lastly. *Take heed of being drowned in sensual delights.*

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