209 To Grieve, Sorrow (*Lugere, Luctus*)

Some grieve usefully, some uselessly. They grieve usefully in the present who bewail sins and who sigh for things eternally lost, Luke 6[:25]: “Woe to you that now laugh: for you shall mourn.” Just as the captive wolf wails in the snare in the present these grieve usefully: the penitent, the suffering, and the meditating. The meditating first on account of three things. On account of the offense to the majesty, Psal. [34:14]: “As one mourning and sorrowful so was I humbled,” so namely, they may be reconciled to an angry God, Exod. 33[:3]: “I will not go up with you, because you are a stiff-necked people: lest I destroy you.” The people hearing this who had offended God were exposed to view.

Second, on account of the condemnation of the soul so a man grieves more for an only son dead than if he had more sons, but the sinner does not have more souls commonly, Jer. 6[:26]: “Make mourning as for an only son, a bitter lamentation.”

Third, on account of the guilt of owed pain, James 4[:9]: “Be afflicted and mourn: let your laughter be turned into mourning.”

Second, the suffering grieve usefully on account of three things. First on account of the lack of the common good, Joel 1[:10]: “The ground has mourned: for the corn is wasted.” And Lam. 1[:4]: “The ways of Sion mourn, because there are none that come to the solemn feast.”

Second, on account of the multiplication of evil in the present.

¶ The example of Job. Neh. 1[:4]: “And when I had heard these words, I sat down, and wept.” And 1 Mach. 1[:42]: “Her excellency was turned into mourning.”

Third, because of the liberation of the dead from the pain of purgatory, Eccli. 22[:13]: “The mourning for the dead,” for the just, “is seven days.”

Third, the meditating ones grieve for pleasure of the heavenly fatherland, Matt. 5[:5]: “Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.” And Isai. 61[:3]: “I will give them a crown for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning.” But in the present “Mourning takes hold of the end of joy,” Prov. 14[:13]. Or that is the joy of communion. For what is it in its time builds to evil and to pain such as if being feverish he consumes a goose or drinks wine, but all of us are infirm by the eating of our first parents. Therefore, to this because we are healthy the cause must be cut off, namely superfluity of food and drink, Eccli. 37[:34]: “By surfeiting many have perished: but he that is temperate, shall prolong life.” Therefore, whoever here is continually not in common will be infirm and grieve. Amos 8[:10]: “And I will turn your feasts into mourning.”

Second, it happens that the joy of musical instruments, the bird delightful in voice, is endangered by the neighboring fowler, so a man admitting the suggestions of the demons, Jer. 5[:26]: “For among my people are found wicked men, that lie in wait as fowlers, setting snares.” And so, the joy of melodies is turned into sorrow either in the present if we repent or in eternity if we do not repent, Job 30[:31]: “My harp is turned to mourning.” Job 21[:12]: “They rejoice at the sound of the organ.” But after this life they will not be empty justice for this neither in heaven nor in hell, Apo. 18[:22]: “And the voice of harpers, and of musicians, and of them that play on the pipe shall no more be heard at all in it,” but weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Third, or the joy will be seen, the harlot and the thief rejoice while they exercise their offices, but when the harlot comes to the door and the thief is hanged the laughter will be converted into sorrow. So, the sinner rejoices in the work of his evil, but when he confesses or is condemned, Prov. 14[:13]: “Laughter shall be mingled with sorrow.” Luke 6[:25]: “Woe to you that now laugh: for you shall mourn.”

¶ Fourth, or there is joy of the many gathered. For the presence of whom generates joy, their absence accumulates mourning, but the presence of temporal things generates worldly joys. Therefore, the absence causes mourning, but it is necessary that all temporal things be absent, Job 27[:19]: “The rich man when he shall sleep shall take away nothing with him.” And [1] John 2[:17]: “The world passes away, and the concupiscence thereof.” Therefore, inevitably joy which now having riches in temporal things will terminate in mourning, Apo. 18[:7]: “As much as she hath glorified herself, and lived in delicacies, so much torment and sorrow give to her.”

Fourth, or it is the joy of loftiness and honor which will be terminated in mourning. For man like smoke the more it is elevated the more he vanishes, Psal. [36:20]: “The enemies of the Lord, presently after they shall be honored and exalted, shall come to nothing and vanish like smoke.”