

A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd at PHILADELPHIA, July 20. 1748.

ON A  
FUNERAL OCCASION,

Wherein the absolute CERTAINTY, and great MOMENT, of the  
Doctrine of the

RESURRECTION

Are proved and illustrated; with a REPLY to the principal O-  
BJECTIONS against it.

By GILBERT TENNENT, A. M.

Ecles. vii. 2. *It is better to go to the House of Mourning, than  
to go to the House of Feasting: For that is the End of all  
Men, and the living will lay it to Heart.*

Dan. xii. 2. *And many of them that Sleep in the Dust of the  
Earth shall awake, some to everlasting Life, and some to  
shame and everlasting Contempt.*

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I. THESSALONIANS, iv. 13. 14.

*But I would not have you to be Ignorant Brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.*

*For if we believe that Jesus died, and arose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.*



THE Apostle in these Verses, labours to assuage and moderate the Sorrows of Christians, on Occasion of the Departure of their pious Friends, Acquaintances and Relations, by observing to them, that their *Death* was but like a *Sleep*, from which they should be in due Season awak'd; and that to indulge an excess of Grief on such Occasions, was but to imitate the unreasonable practice of the *Pagans*, who had no Hope of the Resurrection of the Dead, and

a blessed Immortality ensuing upon it. This Resurrection the Apostle assures us, is a necessary consequent of the Resurrection of CHRIST, for if we believe that JESUS dyed and rose again, even so them also which sleep in JESUS, will God bring with him, i. e. Those who die in a State of vital Union to CHRIST, he will bring their Souls with him in Triumph to the Seat of Judgment, and unite them to their Bodies rais'd from the Dead, that so they may enjoy consummate Blessedness.

FROM the Words of our Text consider'd complexly, we may collect the following *Proposition*, which I think contains their Substance and Scope, viz. *That the Consideration of the glorious Resurrection of such as sleep in JESUS, may justly check immoderate Sorrow for their Departure from us.*

IN Discouraging upon which, I would enquire,

I. *Who those are who may be said to Sleep in JESUS.*

II. *Represent the Properties of that Sorrow which is immoderate on this Occasion.*

III. *Offer some Thoughts upon the Resurrection of the just, and shew why the Consideration hereof, ought to give an allay to the former Sorrow.* I return to the

I. Propos'd, Which was to enquire, *who those are that Sleep in JESUS.* Previous to which I would observe, that *Death* is here compared to a *Sleep*, because of the Analogy between them, especially in the following Instances, namely.

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WHEN we Sleep our Senses are bound up, so that we cannot behold what is done about us. And thus when we die, our Eyes are shut, our Eye strings broken, so that we cannot behold what is done under the Sun.

WHEN we sleep we are likewise *unactive* and cannot carry on the Business of Life. And thus in the *Grave*, whether we all hasten, there is no Work nor Invention, and therefore we should Work while the Day lasts.

FARTHER, Sleep gives rest to the *Body*. And does not Death do so likewise? *Job*, speaking of Death, sayeth, *I should have been still and been quiet, I should have slept, then had I been at rest.* In the *Grave* is a Rest from labour and travail, a Rest from trouble and oppression, *there the Wicked cease from Troubling, and the Weary are at Rest, a rest from Sorrow and Suffering, no Sickness or Uneasiness shall afflict us there, and that which is indeed the best of all, there is a rest from Sin and every Temptation to it!*

AGAIN it may be observed, that Sleep is not *perpetual*, those that sleep for a while do awake at last. And thus those that sleep the sleep of Death, shall awake and arise at the general Judgment. Hence the *Grave* is called a *Bed*, by the Royal Prophet: \* And hence the antient *Fathers* of the three first Centuries after CHRIST, called the *burying Place*, a place of sleep. Is it not upon this Account, that *Solomon* sayeth, † that *the righteous have Hope in their Death*; there is Hope of their Resurrection and happy State after Death, hope of seeing them at CHRIST'S coming to judge the World.

WE go to Sleep without distressing dread, nay sometimes we earnestly desire it. And may not pious Persons cheerfully resign themselves to the Empire of Death, seeing the sting of it is taken away, *viz.* the guilt of Sin? And do not some of them desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ which is far better?

Now those that sleep in JESUS, are such who have received him by Faith, have Communion in his Love, and conformity to his Law.

WHILE in a State of Nature we are separated from Christ, and must, in order to our vital union to him by Faith, be convinced by the Word and Spirit of God, of our guilty, dangerous and helpless Case, so as to be seriously affected with a view of it, and constrained to fly to Christ as our only Remedy, and embrace him as our Prophet, Priest and King without reserve: When this is Real and Sincere, we are united to Jesus in a saving Way; and, as a natural consequent of this Union, Communications of divine Light, Love and Life are vouchsafed upon us, which transform us into the Image of God more and more in our inward governing Dispositions; and encline us habitually to endeavour Conformity thereto in Practice. Those that are in

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*Christ* are new Creatures, have Fellowship with the Father, and with his Son *Jesus Christ*, and walk even as he walked.

HERE it may not be improper to offer some general Hints concerning *Death*, which is doubtless a Dissolution of the *Union* between the Soul and Body, whereby tho' the Soul is not hindered in its activity, yet the Body is hereby rendered a pale and inactive *Carcass*! If the Soul sometimes acts without the Assistance of the Body, while it is in a State of Union with it, as particularly in *sleep*; how much more may it act in a State of Separation from it.

THE sacred Scriptures inform us, that *Death* came into the World by *Sin*, and is the *Wages* of it, and to this Testimony right Reason accords, for why should a Punishment be inflicted without respect had to a previous Fault?

THAT which gives *Death* a very solemn Sound, is that it not only concludes the Projects, Labours, and Enjoyments of *Life*, but likewise brings the Reasons and Means of *Grace* we enjoy to a final Period; we are then call'd to an account for our Stewardship, for we may be no longer Stewards. When Men's *Creath* goeth out, in the *every Day* their *Thoughts* perish: All the Projects to secure a future temporal Good, which perhaps too much occupy'd and perplex'd their anxious labouring Minds, are suddenly broken and crushed by the Foot of *Death*, and they of Consequence disappointed of their fond Expectations!

AT *Death* our State of *Trial* expires, and we immediately enter into an unchangeable and eternal State of Rewards or Punishments; the Comfort or Misery of which, the strongest Imagination cannot sufficiently paint, the largest Understanding comprehend or the most eloquent *Tongue* express.

AND tho' the *Time* of our *Death* be known to and fixed by the Almighty, who has appointed to Man, as a *Hircling*, his *Days*, and established his *Bounds* so that he cannot pass, yet from us it is for wise Reasons kept secret, that we may be thereby excited to continual Preparation, seeing we know not what a *Day* may bring forth. I proceed to the

II. Propos'd, Which was to represent the *Properties* of immoderate *Sorrow* for the *Death* of others.

No doubt we should have a tender Sense of the righteous Displeasure of GOD in those afflictive *bereavements*! Humble ourselves under his mighty Hand, and call upon him in the Day of our Trouble. The *Religion* of CHRIST being rational, does not oblige us to be as *Stocks* or *Stones*, insensible under Afflictions, but on the contrary forbids it, *My Son despise not the Chastening of the Lord, I afflicted them, saith the Almighty by the Prophet, and they have not grieved, yea, they r.s.f. to receive Correction.* True Christianity does not destroy the proper Use of the *Passions*, but only regulates their Objects and Exercise, guides them into a proper Channel, and keeps them within the bounds of Reason and Decency; for Excesses are as hurtful to us, as they are dishonourable to Religion!

BUT when may *Sorrows* for the deceased, be said to be immoderate? I answer, when they incline us to *murmur* against God's *Providence*, which is always wise, righteous, and sovereign, the *Wheels* whereof are full of *Eyes*, *Jehovah* is a *Rock*, his *Ways* are perfect, a *God of Truth* and without *Iniquity*, just and right is he; there are many *devises* in *Man's Heart*, but the *Council of the Lord* that shall stand, and he will do all his *Pleasure*.

MOROVER *Sorrow* may be said to be immoderate, when we are hereby disposed to *distrust* God's *Promises*, which are faithful, and cannot, will not fail of a seasonable *Accomplishment*, when thro' this *Diffidence* we are ready to faint by the *Way*, and sink under the *Weight* of our *Pressures*, when we are thereby rendered unable to perform the *Duties* required of us, and look upon the remaining *Consolations* of God as small and *inconsiderable*!

Now as immoderate *Grief* contains in it, great *Ingratitude* against God's *Goodness*, and *Rebellion* against his *Authority*, so it cannot remove our *Miseries*, but only make us more unable to endure them.

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III. Propos'd, Comes next to be considered, which was to offer some *Thoughts* upon the *Resurrection* of the *Just*, and shew why the *Consideration* hereof should give an *allay* to immoderate *Sorrow* for their *Departure* from us?

OUR Lord himself expressly asserts the *Resurrection* of the *Dead* in these memorable *Words*, *Marvel not at this; for the Hour is coming, in the which all that are in the Graves shall hear his Voice, and shall come forth, they that have done Good, unto the Resurrection of Life; and they that have done Evil, unto the Resurrection of Damnation.\** It cannot be a *spiritual Resurrection* or *Conversion* that is here intended, for then the *Meaning* would be that a *Number* shall be converted and born again in order to be *damned*, which is both false and absurd, and contrary to what *Christ* has elsewhere declared! And therefore it is the *Resurrection* of the *Body* that our *Saviour* asserts, for there are but these two *Kinds* of *Resurrection*, viz. of the *Mind* and of the *Body*. And hence *Christ* promises to raise up his *People* at the last *Day*, who did before experience a *spiritual Resurrection* or *Conversion*,† and we are farther inform'd that God will *swallow up Death in Victory*.‡ It is but reasonable and just, that those *Bodies* which have been the *Companions* of the *Soul* in its *Actions*, should be therewith rewarded according to them.

BUT the *Resurrection* of *Christ* from the *Dead*, is, methinks, an *unanswerable Argument* of our *Resurrection*; if it be considered, that he arose as a *publick Person*, as the *Head* of his *Church*, and promised that their *Bodies* should be made like to his *glorious Body*. The *first Fruits* are a *sure Evidence* of a future *Harvest*, of the same kind therewith: But now is *Christ risen from the*

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*the Dead, saith the Apostle, and become the first Fruits of them that slept.\** To imagine that this *Resurrection of Christ* was spiritual, (signifying his Conversion) is ridiculous and blasphemous! For this would suppose that he was before dead in Sins and Trespases, and it is contrary to the Testimony of the Apostles, who declare that they *saw him, convers'd, and eat with him after his Resurrection*; and *saw him after some Time ascending to Heaven*; to which the Declaration of *CHRIST* himself accords, who when his Disciples were terrified at his first Appearance to them, after his *Resurrection*, imagining that they had seen a Spirit, addressed them in this Language, *Behold my Hands and my Feet, that it is I MY SELF, handle me and see me, for a Spirit hath not Flesh and Bones, as ye see me have.*†

THE Instance of *THOMAS* one would think is sufficient to convince even *Infidelity* itself. When the other Disciples informed him, that they had seen the Lord after his *Resurrection*; he reply'd, *except I shall see in his Hands, the Print of the Nails, and put my Fingers into the Print of the Nails, and thrust my Hand into his Side, I will not believe.* This peevish *Infidelity* shew'd, that he had but little Knowledge of *CHRIST's* Godhead, and had given little heed to the Promise our Lord had made, of his rising again on the third Day, after his Crucifixion.

To convince this Man of his *Infidelity*, eight Days afterwards, *JESUS* in the Presence of the Disciples thus addressed him, *Thomas reach hither thy Finger, and behold my Hands, and reach hither thy Hand, and thrust it into my Side, and be not faithless but believing. Me ginu apistos.* Do not become an Unbeliever to signify that the Denial of *CHRIST's* Resurrection, especially under the Advantage of the strongest Evidences in favour of it, is an awful Sign of the total Want of true Faith, or real Goodness and Piety!

*THOMAS* having comply'd with his Lord's Injunction, 1 John i. 1. upon which Scripture *Tertullian* observes, that the Apostle's hearing and seeing, and handling of him, convinced them that the Body of *Christ* was no Phantasm, (*ipse auditus, et visus, et ne phantasma crederetur, etiam contractatus; Tertul. adversus praxeam.*) I say *Thomas* having comply'd with the aforesaid Injunction was convinc'd of his perilous Mistake, and thereupon immediately acknowledged *Christ* to be the Lord his God, saying *my Lord, and my God.*

UPON this Acknowledgement; *Jesus* observed as follows, *Thomas; because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed; as if Christ had said, thou hast been endued by the Testimony of thy Senses, to believe in the reality of my Resurrection, thou dost well, in that thou hast seen me, hast felt me, and so believed; but it is more noble to believe in my Resurrection from the Dead, without any such sensib-*

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ible Evidence; this, this, is the Way to true BLESSEDNESS! See *John xx. Chap.*

WHEN the *Jews* ask'd a *Sign* of our Lord's divine Mission and Authority, he referred them to his *Resurrection*, *destroy THIS TEMPLE, and in three Days will I raise it up: This he spake of the Temple of his Body: When therefore he was risen from the Dead, his Disciples remembered that he had said this unto them, and they believed the Scripture, (John ii. 18---22.)* And hence we may learn, that to deny the RESURRECTION of the SAME BODY of CHRIST, which was laid in the SEPULCHRE, is to DISBELIEVE the SCRIPTURE; to make CHRIST a FALSE PROPHET, to overthrow the *Sign* or EVIDENCE of his divine MISSION, which he himself directed them to, and consequently to SAP the very FOUNDATIONS of CHRISTIANITY. Very terrible, but unavoidable Consequence!

WELL then; seeing the same Body which was laid in the Sepulchre, with its Flesh and Bones, was raised from the Dead, then either the same numerical Bodies of his People, that sleep in the dust shall be raised (as to their Substance) at the general Judgment, or his Promise of making them like his, must entirely fail. Now if Christ be preach'd that he rose from the Dead, how say some among you that there is no Resurrection of the Dead, but if there be no Resurrection of the Dead, then is Christ not risen, and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your Faith is also vain; yea we are found (saith the Apostle) false Witnesses of God, because we have testify'd of God, that he raised up Christ, whom he raised not up, if so be that the Dead rise not.\*

FROM what has been said, the great stress which the Apostle lays upon this DOCTRINE of CHRISTIANITY easily appears; Agreeable to which is what he elsewhere speaks of *Hymenæus* and *Philetus*, who, says he, concerning the Truth have erred, saying; that the Resurrection is passed already, and overthrow the Faith of some. † He likewise observes, that their Word eat as doth a Canker; their Doctrine spread like a Gangreen; they vainly imagined that there should be no Resurrection of the Body in time coming; but that what was intended by the Resurrection in Scripture, was already pass'd, either in the Resurrection of Christ, or in the spiritual Change which is wrought in the Hearts of good Men in this Life by the Holy Ghost. The Corruption and Danger of which flesh pleasing Principle, the Apostle sets himself to oppose and represent.

NOR was this Notion peculiar to some erroneous and heretical Christians in the Apostolick Times, No! It was the universal Opinion of the *Saducees* and *Pagans*, that there will be no Resurrection of the Dead. The former deny'd it, and the latter decided it. When the erroneous *Saducees* (Men of the same stamp with the modern *Deists*) who say that there is no Resurrection, endeavoured to

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nonplus our LORD concerning it, by an impertinent query, he answered, *Ye do err not knowing the Scriptures, or the Power of God, for in the Resurrection they neither marry nor are given in Marriage.* (k) The proud Pagan Athenians, when they heard Paul preach of the Resurrection of the Dead, they mock'd him, (l) they look'd upon the Opinion as absurd and ridiculous; and no wonder, for in the Wisdom of God, the World by Wisdom knew not God. The Doctrine of Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection, was to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those that believe it is the Wisdom of God, and the Power of God.

HE MIGHT think the Evangelists Declaration, that at the Crucifixion of CHRIST, the Graves were opened, and many Bodies of Saints which slept arose, and came out of their Graves after his Resurrection, and went into the holy City, and appear'd to many, (m) is no inconsiderable Proof of the RESURRECTION of the DEAD, for hereby a plain SPECIMEN is given of it.

I MIGHT add, that if the Body did not arise, the Soul would not be compleatly happy, because of its desire of Union therewith.

THE Resurrection is properly the reviving or raising up a dead Body, and re-uniting it to its own Soul; *Thy dead Men, saith the Prophet, shall live together, with my dead Body shall they arise, awake and sing ye that dwell in the Dust, for thy dew is as the dew of Herbs, and the Earth shall cast out her Dead.* (n)

THE Cause of it, is the Almighty Power of God: And hence the Resurrection of Christ is ascrib'd to the working of his mighty Power. (o) To the Exertion of which, the Sound of the last Trump, and Voice of the Arch-Angel, will be introductory Preludes, or Preparatory Signals!

The Subjects of the Resurrection, are all that ever liv'd, and have dyed, and have not yet risen from the Dead, and all that shall exist to the End of Time, those only excepted who shall be found alive at the coming of Christ to judge the World, *who shall not sleep the sleep of Death, but be changed in a Moment, in the twinkling of an Eye, at the last Trump; for the Trumpet shall sound and the Dead shall be rais'd incorruptible.* (p) There shall be a Resurrection both of the just and unjust; the Dead, small and great, shall stand before God; the Sea shall give up its dead, and Death and Hell shall give up their Dead. (q)

THE Time of the Resurrection will be the End of the World. just before the general Judgment, then, saith the Apostle, *cometh the End, when he shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all Rule and all Authority and Power,---The last Enemy shall be then destroyed, which is Death.* (r)

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(k) Mat. xxii. (l) Acts xvii. 32. (m) Mat. xxvii. 52, 53.  
 (n) Isaiah xxvi. 19. (o) Ephes. xix. 20. (p) 1 Cor. xv. 52, 53.  
 (q) Acts xxiv. 15. Rev. xx. 12, 13. (r) 1 Cor. xv. 24, 26.

The *End* of the *Resurrection*, is undoubtedly the *Glory* of God's *Power*, *Mercy* and *Justice*, which will be hereby rendered eminently conspicuous.

THE *Differences* of the *Resurrection* of the *Just* and *Unjust*, will be very great; altho' both shall be raised by the same *Power*, and judged by the same *Judge*, and made *Immortal*, yet there will be a vast difference in many respects, particularly as to the *Principle*, *End* and *Manner*.

THE *Principle* of the one, will be God's *Love* and *Promise*; and the *Merit* of *Christ*: Hence *Christ* is called the *Resurrection*; not only as he is the efficient but meritorious *Cause* of it; in consequence of which, he promises to raise up his at the last *Day*: But the *Resurrection* of the *Wicked*, flows from God's *Justice* and threatening.

THE *End* will be also very different, which the *Prophet* emphatically represents, *and many that sleep in the dust of the Earth shall awake, some to everlasting Life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.* (s)

THE *Manner* will be likewise different; for the *Bodies* of the *Saints* will be *spiritual*, in respect of their *Qualities*: *It is sown*, says the *Apostle*; *a natural Body*; *it is raised a spiritual Body*, (t) and therefore they will be nimble in their *Motions*, and no *Obstruction* to the *Soul* in its *Operations*: In the mean time, you may observe, that the *Apostle* Points to the *SAME IT*, both as natural and spiritual, shewing that it is the very same numerical identical *Body*, as to substance, which was laid in the *Grave*, and suffers such a *Change* in *Quality* or *Disposition*:

FARTHER the *Bodies* of those that *Sleep* in *Jesus*, will be *Immortal* in *Duration*; for then *mortality* shall put on *immortality*, and *corruption*, *incorruption*. In respect of *Power*, they will be *Strong*, *it is sown in Weakness*; *it is rais'd in Power*; they shall no more labour under *Weakness*, or be exposed to *weariness*, to *sickness* or *Pain*. *The Inhabitant of the new Jerusalem*, shall not say, *I am sick*, the *People that dwell therein* shall be forgiven their *Iniquities*: (u) All *Tears* shall be wip'd away from their *Eyes*, all *Sorrow* and *Sighing* shall fly for ever from their *Hearts*: They shall not need *Cloaths* or *Food*, being *spiritual*; or *Sleep* or *Marriage*, being *immortal*; like the *Angels* of God in *Heaven*, as our *SAVIOUR* informs us, (w) As to *form*, the *Bodies* of those that *Sleep* in *Jesus*, will be *beautiful* and *glorious*; *it is sown in Dishonour*, *it is raised in Glory*. It will be *Perfect* in *Parts*, and adorn'd with the *brightest Splendors*; and so made like the *glorious Body* of *Christ*, which at his *Transfiguration* shone as the *Sun*, while his *Raiment* was white as the *Light*. (x)

BUT the *Bodies* of the *Wicked*, shall be raised in *Dishonour*, and be *abhorring to all Flesh*. (y)

THAT

(s) Dan. xii. 2.

(t) 1 Cor. xv. 44.

(u) Isa. xxxiii. 24.

(w) Mat. xxii. 30.

(x) Mat. xxviii. 3.

(y) Isaiah lxvi. 4.

THAT the same Body, in Substance, will be rais'd from the Dead, appears (besides what has been already offered upon this Head) from the express Testimony of *Job*, who declar'd, *that tho' Worms destroy'd his Body, yet in his Flesh he should see God* (x) And indeed if it were not so, but that another Body, different in Substance from the former, should be form'd in the End of Time and united to the Soul, it would not be a Resurrection, but a new Creation: For the Resurrection is a standing up again of the same Body that fell into the Dust of Death; and hence it is compar'd to a *Sleep*, to signify that it is the same Body that dyes, that awakes at the Resurrection. Was it not the same Body of *Christ* that was crucify'd, that arose from the Dead? If not what shall become of the credibility of the Gospel, which (in a great Measure) hangs upon this Fact?

Is it not reasonable, that the same Body that sin'd, should suffer, and not another that has not been accessory thereto? And is it not equally reasonable, that the Bodies of the Saints, which are *Temples of the Holy Ghost, and Members of Christ*, and have contributed their Part in Acts of *Devotion, Vertue and Charity*, should in consequence hereof be glorified together with the Soul, in the Presence of God forever.

If those that are alive at the coming of *Christ* to Judgment shall not die, but be changed in a moment, as was before observed, then the same Body, in Substance, that is now united to the Soul, is only altered or changed as to its Qualities, and goes to Heaven: If it is not separated from the Soul, it goes with it to Heaven; but it is not separated, says the Apostle (1 Cor. xv. 7.) *Behold I show you a Mystery, we shall not all Sleep, but we shall all be changed in a Moment at the last Trump.* Now without Death (which is frequently term'd *Sleep* in Scripture) there can be no Separation of the Soul from the Body, for the Nature of Death consists therein: And if the present Body be not separated, another newly created cannot be united to the Soul, unless it be suppos'd to go to Heaven with two Bodies of different Kinds, which is as absurd as it is unscriptural.

WELL if some have gone to Heaven with the same Body in Substance, as was united to the Soul in this Life; witness *Enoch, Elias*, and our LORD *JESUS*; and many shall do so at the last Judgment, as the Apostle assures us in the Scripture before quoted: Then why not all that are pious? Is there any mention in the inspired Writings, that some of the Saints, after the general Judgment, shall have one sort of Body, and others another? No! But if there was, would it not contradict that Promise, *that our vile Bodies (without Exception) shall be changed and fashioned like unto the glorious Body of CHRIST?* (*Phil. iii. 21.*)

THE Grave which is a *Prison* to the impenitent Sinner, is a *Bed of Rest* to a Saint of God, in which it sleeps secure till the general

ral Resurrection. It is still united to CHRIST notwithstanding of its Separation from the Soul, and is kept by a wakeful Providence, that none of it be missing, and when the appointed Time comes, it shall be brought with Honour and Triumph from its dwelling in the Dust, and reunited to its astient and intimate Companion, that both may mutually glorify and enjoy the blessed God, without Defect, Interruption or End.

THESE Considerations, together with a view of the glorious State of perfect and perpetual Freedom, from every Sin and from every Misery, and the everlasting Possession of all Good, which those that sleep in JESUS pass into, may reasonably moderate our Sorrows for their Departure from us; seeing that they are unspeakably more happy, than while they sojourn'd with us in this vale of Tears! They now behold, without a Glass, the adorable Perfections of the divine Nature, the inimitable, the inexpressible Charms of the divine Word and Works (of Creation, Redemption, and Providence,) which here they had but small and transient, yet sweet and delightful Glimpses of; they now are perfectly conform'd to God in Holiness, and perfectly enjoy Jehovah's Love, without Interruption, without a Period, or any Fears of it; this fills their Hearts with Ravishment, this tunes their Tongues for unceasing Hosanna's, to God and the LAMB that sits upon the Throne. There no Sin, no Sorrow, no Temptation, shall have any Entrance! O blessed Place! Who wou'd not desire to be dissolv'd, and to be with JESUS? How then can we be excessively grieved for any that have gone from this miserable World, this Place of Groaning and Weariness thither? Seeing that our Loss is their Gain, and we shall see them again, when they awake out of their Sleep in the Morning of the Resurrection, cloth'd with the same Bodies as to Substance, but glorious in their Qualities, for them that sleep in JESUS shall GOD bring with him.

BUT it is objected, that the Doctrine of the Resurrection opposes Reason. I answer, No, it does not: For it is not impossible in the Nature of Things; there is no Absurdity or Contradiction in it. Why may not that GOD who made all Things out of Nothing, raise the Dead out of Something? And indeed the Almighty Power of GOD is the Principle which CHRIST himself resolves the Resurrection into, as has been before observed.

NOR is it difficult for that God, to whose Eye all Nature is entirely and eternally open, who sees were every Particle of his People's Dust is scattered, and is infinite in Strength, to prevent by his all-governing Providence, the Commixture of Bodies, so that every soul shall have its own Body, at the Advent of Jesus to judge the Universe.

BUT does not the Scripture inform us, that the Saints shall be like the Angels, even in regard of their Bodies? It is true, but that is not in regard of the sameness of Nature, but only as to Similitude or resemblance of Qualities; their Bodies will be like the Angels, incorruptible, immortal, but not of the same Nature or

Substance with them, pure Spirits; for that is not asserted, and indeed to assert it, implies a Contradiction, for a *Body* and a *Spirit* are of different Natures, so that both can not be the same; this our Lord confirms by these Words before mentioned; *a Spirit hath not Flesh and Bones, as ye see me have: Behold my Hands and Feet, that it is I myself handle me and see.*

Now the Apostle *John* informs us, that he and the rest of the Apostles obey'd this Precept, of their Master, *that which was from the Beginning*, (in respect of his divine Nature) *which we have heard, which we have seen with our Eyes, which we have looked on, with he, and our Hands have handled of the Word of Life, and bear witness that eternal Life was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.* (1. *John* i. 1, 2.) The Apostles handled or felt the *Body of Christ*, both before his Death, and after his Resurrection. (See *Matt.* xiv. 31. *John* xiii. 23. *Luke* xxiv. 39---44. *John* xx. 27, 28, 29.)

To the aforesaid Testimony, of the true and faithful Witness, right Reason adds its suffrage, by informing us, that a *Body* is a material Substance, which may be seen and felt, and has the Dimensions of length, breadth, height, and depth.

BUT that a *Spirit* is an intelligent Being, without Matter, and consequently without the Properties of it; a *Being* that can neither be seen or felt; a *Being* that has no Colour or Figure, no Breadth, Length, &c. He that contradicts this, does not only contradict the Wisdom of the Father, but set himself in Opposition to the first Principles of Science, as well as to Experience, and Common Sense.

It is true the Apostle says, that it is sown a natural Body, it is raised a spiritual Body; yes, but still he calls it a *Body*, and points to the same *Body* that was sown or put into the Grave; and therefore must intend *Matter* however refined, or else he does not speak good Sense; but the latter is improper to imagine, and therefore the former is true. If the Apostle had design'd to acquaint us, that a new *Spirit* or *Soul*, should be added at the general Judgment, to the one we have already; he would have told us so, by assigning to it, it's proper Name of *Spirit*, and not *spiritual Body*, or *Body spiritualiz'd*.

IN a Word, that *spiritual Body*, the Apostle speaks of, either has *Matter*, or it has not. If it has not, then either a new *Soul* will be then created, and added to this; and so every one will have two *Souls*, which is as ridiculous as it is unscriptural! Or else the Substance of the present *Body* will be turn'd into a pure *Spirit*, which is more absurd, if possible, than the former! Because in this Case it not only follows, that every one will have two *Souls*, but that in order to the Formation of one of them, the Substance of the present *Body* must be reduced to nothing, for while it retains the Nature of a *Body*, it cannot be a *Spirit*; and if it be reduced to Nothing, how can it be said to be turn'd into a *Spirit*? Is it not as contrary to the divine Wisdom, to annihilate any Part of his Creation, as it is impossible for his Power,

to produce what is contradictory to *Reason*, and the *Nature of Things*? For that would imply Weakness.

But if the aforesaid *Body*, has *Matter*, tho' never so much refin'd and spiritualiz'd in its *Qualities*, is not the Cause in Effect given up? And is it not more agreeable to *Scripture* and *Reason*, to conclude, that that *Matter* will be what was united to the *Soul* before, rather than *Matter* newly created, seeing there is no mention (in *Scripture*) of such a new *Creation of Bodies*, or *Matter* at the general Judgment, nor is it consistent with the divine *Wisdom*, to exert *Almighty Power*, in creating new *Matter* without any Necessity: Not to say that it is hard to reconcile the perpetual Punishment of *Bodies* newly created, without any Fault contracted by them to the common Maxims of Justice and Equity, which all Mankind do with one Voice acknowledge.

AND altho' sinful and corruptible *Flesh and Blood* cannot enter into the Kingdom of *GOD*, yet sinless and incorruptible can, otherwise the *Body of Christ* must be excluded from a Place there, which is shocking to imagine! The *Apostle* in the latter Part of the Verse referred to, shews that he means corruptible *Flesh and Blood*, by saying *neither doth Corruption inherit Incorruption*.

SURELY either some *Charity* should be extended to *Jesus Christ*, by those that profess his Name, or else, in order to be self-consistent, they should lay aside that Profession altogether, and openly renounce all Claim to him, or the grand Peculiars of his Religion, and assume to themselves another Character; for it is but fit and candid, that Names and Things should agree. If the very *Body of Christ* (as to Substance) which was laid in the Sepulchre did not go to Heaven, the *APOSTLES* are FALSE WITNESSES: *CHRIST* himself is unworthy of our CREDIT! and consequently HIS RELIGION OVERTHROWN!

It is true the *Apostle* sayeth, *thou sowest not that Body that shall be*, but bare Grain it may chance of Wheat, or some other Grain, but *God giveth it a Body as it pleaseth him, to every Seed its own Body*. The true meaning of which is no more, than that *God* giveth to every Grain or Kind of Seed, such a Body as is agreeable to his Will, and a different Body according to the Nature of the Grain: Yet none can reasonably deny, but that it is the *Seed sown* which cometh up, tho' with a different Body in respect of some *Qualities*: When it is sown, it is bare grain, but when it again riseth, it is not bare Grain, without either Stalk or Ear, which was the *Body sown*; yet every particular *Grain* has its particular *Body*, and the same in *Kind* with itself, tho' different in *Qualities*. The *Apostle's* design in these *Similitudes*, is partly to shew the Possibility of a *Resurrection*, by observing, that *that which is sown is not quickned except it die*; and partly to shew the Manner of it, in the different *Qualities* and Condition of *Bodies* after the *Resurrection*, to what they are at present; they are now mortal, but then they will be immortal, &c.

THE

THE Improvement of this Subject remains.

SHALL the Bodies of those that Sleep in *JESUS*, be raised from the Dead and glorify'd : Then, methinks, the Consideration hereof should constrain us to preserve them in Sanctity and Honour, not making the *Members of Christ the Members of a Harlot, but glorifying God in our Bodies and Spirits: which are God's*; we should keep our Eyes from unchaste Glances, our Tongues from Slander and evil Speaking, and our Hands from Bribes.

THE Doctrinal Proposition I have been discoursing upon, easily applies itself to the present Occasion, forasmuch as there is Reason to hope, from the deceased Youths soundness in Christian Principles, acquaintance with experimental Religion, and blameless Conversation, that he slept in *Jesus*, there is no Reason for his Relations indulging an excess of Grief, on Occasion of his *Départure* from them to a better World. They should rather speak in the Language of *Eli* and *David*, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good. The Lord has given, the Lord has taken away, blessed be the Name of the Lord.* In the mean Time they should be hereby excited to prepare for their own Change, by the earnest Use of all appointed Means. When afflictive bereavements are conscientiously improved, they become valuable Mercies. *Hear ye the Rod, and who hath appointed it, and behold Jehovah's Name wrote upon it. Despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor saint when ye are rebuked of him; for tho' no chastening for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous; nevertheless it yieldeth the peaceable Fruits of Righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby.*

BUT to address the Audience more generally. Seeing that those who Sleep in *Jesus*, are translated to such a blessed State, we should enquire, whether we are in *Christ*? For surely none but such who are in him in Life, can reasonably expect to Sleep in him at Death. Have we received *Christ* by Faith? Have we had Communion in his Love? And are we conformed to his Law? Is *Christ* precious to us? Do we live to his *Glory* and upon his *Offices*? Do we love his People, and are we concerned for his *Honour and Kingdom*? Such as have experienced these Things, need not be afraid of *Death*, for it will be but as a refreshing Sleep to them; a blessed inlet to a glorious Eternity. But such as are destitute of the aforesaid Characters, have great Reason to be afraid of *Death*; because of the dreadful Consequences of it to Christless Souls. Is it not a dreadful Thing to be forever separated from all the Sweets of *Paradise*, and to fall into the Hands of the living God?

DOES *Death* put a final period to all our temporal Enjoyments? Then should we not labour to be weaned from them, and set our Affections on the Things that are above?

O BRETHREN! What Reason have such dying Worms as we, who must be so soon reduced to Rottenness and Putrefaction, and who

who are liable to the stroke of Death every Moment, to be humble, watchful, and diligent in seeking and serving God!

THIS Instance of Mortality, calls aloud upon us all, to seek a vital Union to *Jesus Christ*, speedily and vehemently, that so when God-Man sends his Messenger for us; we may sweetly sleep in him, and be at last brought in triumph with him to the general Judgement: To this End we should confess and bewail our Offences, turn from them, and embrace the *Mediator*.

But in particular, methinks, this *Providence* should alarm young People, to remember their Creator in the Days of their Youth, while the evil Days are far off, when they shall say they have no Pleasure in them.

Oh how amiable is *Religion in Youth*! It is like Blossoms in the Spring, surely it is more likely that you shall find God in a way of Mercy in *Youth*, than afterwards, in case you seek him heartily; for your Hearts are now more tender and receptive of good Impressions, and God generally strives more with such, than others, *I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me*, saith the Almighty: But if ye give a deaf Ear to God's gracious Calls by his Word and Providence, have ye not Reason to fear that his Spirit will cease striving with you, and that your Hearts will be judicially hardened!

SURELY the earlier ye turn to God, ye will have the clearer Evidence of your Sincerity, and the greater Opportunity of Serviceableness to Mankind in general, and to your Relations in particular, upon whom the Example of your early Religion may have a blessed Effect, which may God grant, for CHRIST'S Sake, AMEN.

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