

A  
Funeral Sermon  
Upon the sad Occasion of the  
DEATH  
OF  
*Mordecai Abbott Esq;*  
Preach'd *March 17th*, 1699/1700.

To the Mournful Relict of *Mordecai Abbott*, Esq;

MADAM,

*THE following Sermon, which was compos'd in a little time, and when a great many other things of importance lay on my hands, had never been expos'd to publick View, had not You more than once press'd it upon me, from the Affection I bore to your deceased Husband, my very worthy and most agreeable Friend; whose Name will be ever dear to me. But tho I am conscious it has many Defects, yet being design'd to celebrate his Memory, I thought my self bound by the Laws of Friendship, as well as the Obligations of Duty, to inscribe it to your Name, from whom I have receiv'd the most liberal and undeserv'd Favours. And tho it may in some sort renew your Sorrows, yet I hope, with the Blessing of God, it will tend to restrain 'em from Excess.*

*Madam, You have all the Assurance, that you can have in this World, of your late Consort's Happiness in the next; he having only chang'd your pleasing, but temporary Society, for the endless Felicities of Abraham's Bosom.*

*He has run his Christian Race, and receiv'd his unfading Crown: he has pass'd thro an ill-natur'd World with an unspotted Name; for Envy it self could not stain his Character.*

*May his Virtues live in his Childrens Memory, and his Example in their Lives: May all the tender Branches of your hopeful Family become Plants of Renown; may they tread in their Father's Steps, and serve their Father's God: And that You, dear Madam, may long continue with 'em, to awe and guide their Youth, and to shed the Influences of your Virtues among 'em, is the unfeign'd Desire of,*

MADAM, Your very Humble  
and Oblig'd Servant,

JOHN PIGGOTT.

1 THESS. 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 rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.*

THE melancholy Air that sits on every Countenance, and the sad Solemnities that attend our meeting at this time, give sufficient Intimation of what I am come about: I need not tell you that it is to preach a Funeral Sermon, and whose Death has given me the sorrowful Occasion; for the deceased Gentleman's Worth was so well known, and the want of him is so much felt, that the Court, the City, and the Church of God are not a little sensible who it is that is ravish'd from them.

This sudden and surprizing Providence represents the Frailty of Human Nature, and the necessity of an early and constant Preparation for the other World: *For this World and the Fashion of it passes away.*<sup>1</sup> Its Glory and Inhabitants vanish in the twinkling of an eye. Lord, how vain a thing is Man! how little is he to be accounted of, seeing his Breath is in his Nostrils, and may be stopt by a thousand Accidents, and his Soul let out at the least Pore of his Body!

Yet so great is the Stupidity that has seiz'd on the World, that most People are for putting the evil Day far from 'em, as only fit to be thought on by the Sick and the Aged: tho they know not what a Day may bring forth; and tho they cannot but be inform'd by the Records of the Grave, that there are more drop into it in their full strength, while their *Bones are moistned with Marrow,*<sup>2</sup> than there are that arrive to a good old Age before they make their Bed in darkness.

Indeed there are none so wretchedly sceptical as to deny, or disbelieve that they are mortal, or that seriously think they shall never go to the House appointed for all living: yet the generality of the World live as if they were never to die: and I confess of the two, it seems to me a greater instance of Madness and Folly, to think we shall die, and not prepare for it, than to imagine we are immortal, and so incapable of dying. So that upon the whole, a Man cannot give a better Evidence of true Wisdom, than by making his Preparation for Death the great business of his Life; for Death we are sure will come, but at what time we know not: therefore 'tis the most reasonable thing in the World that we should be always ready.

I little thought that he who was worshipping of God in this place this day month, would so soon have sunk down to the Dust of Death; and indeed God only knows which of us shall take the next tun to the Sepulcher. I know 'tis impossible to mention this, but there will be a very strong Emotion in most Minds; to calm which, a recourse to my Text is the most proper Remedy that I know of.

*For I would not have you be ignorant, Brethren, &c.*

'Tis not improbable but that the Death of some Persons in the *Thessalonian* Church might occasion St. *Paul* to address himself to the Survivors (as in the words of the Text) that he might arm 'em against the Fears of Death, and moderate their excessive Mourning for the Dead. In the words I observe these three Parts:

I. The Apostle's extraordinary care to inform the *Thessalonian* Christians concerning the State of their dead Friends: *But I would not have you to be ignorant, Brethren, concerning them that are asleep.*

---

1 1 Cor. 7. 31.  
2 Job 21. 24.

II. A Dissuasive from immoderate Sorrow, upon the Death of those that are pious; *That ye sorrow not even as others that have no hope.*

III. The Arguments the Apostle uses to prevent excessive Mourning for the dead in Christ. The first is taken from the nature of their Death, 'tis described under the soft Character of a Sleep. The second is fetch'd from what shall follow this Sleep; they shall be awaken'd in the morning of the Resurrection: *Those that sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.* Which the Apostle not only asserts, but proves: *For, says he, if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, q d.* if there be any solid reason for our believing the Death and Resurrection of Christ, then we have an infallible assurance of the revival of all that die united to him: *Those that sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.*

I shall briefly treat of these three General Heads, and then make some Application sutable to my Text, and the solemn and sad Occasion of discoursing from it.

I. The Apostle's extraordinary care to inform the *Thessalonian* Christians concerning the state of their deceased Friends: *But I would not have you to be ignorant, Brethren, concerning them which are asleep.* Those words seem to import, that the Apostle apprehended divers of these Christians to be under some mistakes with respect to their dead Friends: And 'tis thought that their Persecutors had shock'd 'em in their Faith about the Resurrection of the Body. For we know, that the *Greek* Philosophers, as well as the Sadduces among the *Jews*, did explode and ridicule this great Doctrine; which they perform'd with so much Art and Subtilty, that some Members of the Primitive Church doubted, whilst others affirm'd there was no Resurrection. And this seems to be the occasion of their excessive Sorrow, they looking upon their dead Friends not only as remov'd out of the World, but as lost for ever (as to their Bodies at least.) And their Persecutors, that they might increase their Infidelity and their Sorrow at the same time, when they put the Christians to death for the Cause of Christ, did it in such ways, as might have the appearance at least of destroying and annihilating the Matter that compos'd their Bodies: Sometimes committing 'em to the Flames, and scattering their Ashes in the Air and in Rivers, that their surviving Friends might conclude it was impossible they should ever rise again: At other times they were devour'd by wild Beasts, or else thrown as a Prey to the Fish of the Sea; and all this to suppress the Belief of the Resurrection.

Now whether these Enemies to the Christian Doctrine did imagine by these Methods to annihilate the Matter of the Human Body; or so to scatter or confound these Particles of Dust, as to render it impossible for God to recollect and range 'em in their due Place and Order, so as to compose the same Human Body 'tis equally absurd. The former is very unphilosophical, for 'tis impossible by any method in the World to annihilate Matter: indeed its Form may be destroy'd, and it may receive a variety of new Figures; it may be differently modified ten thousand times, but cannot be annihilated by the Arts of any Creature under Heaven. With respect to the latter, 'tis impious and atheistical, for it supposes a defect either in the Knowledg or Power of God, or both; which is as vain as to say, there is no God: for we cannot frame a becoming Idea of a Deity, without conceiving him clothed with every Perfection, and as possessing of 'em infinitely. So that allowing there is such a Being as God, that is Omniscient and Almighty, 'tis as rational to believe he can recollect these dispersed Atoms again, as unite 'em in their first Production. For all things are possible to God, who can, if he please, impress a kind of natural force upon the disunited Parts, and cause 'em to move to one another, as readily as the filings of Iron to a Loadstone,<sup>3</sup> tho mingled with millions of Particles of Sand.

The infinite Knowledg, together with the irresistible Power of God, answers all Objections against the Resurrection of the Body; the same Being having plighted his Faithfulness for this Event,

---

3 That is like iron filings to a magnet [Ed.]

promising that the Dead shall be raised. And this is one great Doctrine which St. *Paul* in the Text aims to set in a clear and certain light, that the *Thessalonians* who seem'd to be shaken, might be confirm'd in their belief of this important Article of the Christian Creed: *Brethren I would not have you to be ignorant concerning them that are asleep — for them that sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him: q.d.* 'Tis true, your Friends are fallen asleep, but 'tis not an eternal one, for they shall be awaken'd from it; they are dead but they shall revive and rise again; for God our Saviour shall bring them with him, when he comes in the Clouds of Heaven. Here I might make several very profitable Remarks upon the Apostle's care to correct and remove the Mistakes those Christians had imbibed to whom he wrote, but my time will not suffer me to stay upon this Head. I proceed therefore to the

II. General, which is a dissuasive from immoderate Sorrow upon the death of those that are pious. *I would not have you to be ignorant, Brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others that have no hope.* The design of these words is very obvious, viz. to temper our Grief, to regulate and bound our Sorrows for those religious Friends that are snatch'd from us by Death. St. *Paul* does not dissuade from all kind of Mourning, but from that which is excessive; a moderate Sorrow is due to the Memory of our deceased Friends.

And we find some, whose Characters shine brightest in the Scripture-History, under a Cloud of Sorrow, when their Relations have been remov'd by Death; yet 'tis no where, that I know of, charg'd upon 'em as a Crime, that they wept for the Dead. *Abraham*, who has an honourable mention among the Old-Testament Worthies for his great Self-denial, as well as the strength of his Faith, in being ready to offer up his only Son at the Divine Command; yet gave a vent to his Grief, and pour'd out a flood of Tears, when *Sarah* the Delight of his Eyes was taken away with a stroke: *And Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and wept for her.*<sup>4</sup>

And *Job*, that Mirror of Patience and Probity, that had none like him in the Earth, as God himself testifies to Satan,<sup>5</sup> yet, as we read, *rent his Mantle, shav'd his Head, fell upon his face to the ground,*<sup>6</sup> when he heard of the death of his Children; these were the Ceremonies then in use as the sign of a deep mourning: yet we are told, *that in all this he sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.*<sup>7</sup>

But that Instance which is best suited to my purpose, and free even from the suspicion of a Crime, is that of our Blessed Saviour, who tho' never guilty of the least Excess, yet joins with the *Jews* in their Sorrow for *Lazarus*: for when he saw *Mary*, and those that attended her, weeping for her dead Brother, the Text says, *he groaned in the Spirit, and was troubled;*<sup>8</sup> but when he came nearer to the Grave, his Grief flow'd out at his Eyes, for the Blessed Jesus is said to have *wept.*<sup>9</sup> Now whatever might be the occasion of his Grief, whether his love to *Lazarus*, or the *Jews* Infidelity, or any other reason, 'tis plain that those who stood about the Grave took it in the first sense; therefore they presently cry out, *Behold how he loved him!*<sup>10</sup>

Thus you see from the brightest Examples in Scripture, that a moderate Sorrow for the Dead is allowable. Moreover, let me remark, that the contrary Carriage under the loss of our Friends would look like a Contempt of the Divine Hand; for as we are not to faint under the Rebukes, so we are not to despise the Chastening of the Lord. The Wise-Man tells us, that there is a time to mourn and a time to weep, as well as for other things;<sup>11</sup> certainly it cannot be an unfit season to weep, when God takes away our pious Friends, that have been eminently useful, and publick Blessings to a Nation.

---

4 Gen. 23. 2.

5 Job 1.7. [This should be Job 1:8, Ed.]

6 Ver. 20. [Job 1:20, Ed.]

7 Ver. 21. [This should be Job 1:22, Ed.]

8 John 11. 33.

9 Ver. 34. [This should be John 11:35, Ed.]

10 Ver. 36. [John 11:36, Ed.]

11 Eccles. 3. 4.

And 'tis observable how the Prophet complains of the gross Stupidity of the *Jews*, who were insensible under the signs of the Divine Displeasure; *The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart.*<sup>12</sup> And we find also that 'tis threaten'd as a Judgment, when any die without being lamented;<sup>13</sup> yea, 'tis said to be the *Portion of the wicked from God, and the Heritage of the Oppressor; that they are cut off, and their Widows shall not weep.*<sup>14</sup> So that upon the whole 'tis very evident, that St. *Paul* in my Text has no design, in his Dissuasive from immoderate Sorrow, to recommend the Stoical Apathy: for the Rules of the Christian Institution have no tendency to eradicate our Passions, but to correct and govern 'em.

And here I cannot but remark, that what has been said casts no favourable Aspect on the Doctrine of the Stoick Philosophers, which teaches that Men are to stifle all natural Affections both of Joy and Sorrow; that no outward Emoluments should move the Affection of Joy: and that a Person should be as easy and as free from the Passion of Grief in a violent Paroxysm of the Gout or Stone, as if he were in perfect health in the midst of the most ravishing Delights. 'Tis reported of *Possidonius* a Stoick Philosopher, who passed a great part of his Life under very acute Diseases, that being visited by *Pompey* at *Rhodes*, he entertain'd him with a Philosophical Discourse; and when his Pains were the most sharp and violent, he chid 'em in such Language as this: \* *In vain dost thou assault me, Pain; tho thou art troublesome, thou shalt never force me to confess thou art evil.* Indeed could the Pomp of words abate our painful Sensations, there would be some shew of Reason in this Philosopher's method; but since the contrary is evident by universal Experience, 'twas an instance of great Pride, and the most ridiculous Folly. And 'tis worth remarking, that the greatest Masters in this Philosophy, when they fell into sharp Adversity, suddenly sunk into such deep Despair and Impatience, that they laid violent hands upon themselves. I need only name *Cato* and *Brutus*, the most eminent among 'em, "who (as one observes) professing themselves to be wise in their Speculations, became Fools in Practice, and were confounded with all their Philosophy, when they should have made use of it." Which brings to my mind a Passage I have read of *Seneca*, who was not a little inclin'd to the Stoick Philosophy; who tells us, that at the death of his dear Friend *Annaeus Serenus*, he\* was found of the number of those whom Grief overcame. Upon which, one remarks; "That Nature was too strong for his Philosophy, tho at other times none out-braves the Misfortunes of Life, or the Terrors of Death at a higher rate, as if they had not the least power to move his wise Man." So that upon the whole we see the Insufficiency of Philosophick Axioms to support a Mind overwhelm'd with Sorrow. But that which Philosophy has vainly attempted, Divine Revelation has fully compleated and finish'd; as will be evident, when I consider the Arguments St. *Paul* uses in the Text to dissuade from mourning as those that have no hope.

But before I touch upon them, I must be a little more particular in this other matter. I have already told you what kind of Sorrow for the Dead, the Scripture indulges; but that which is without hope, you see our Text condemns. Now our Mourning may fall under this Character;

*First*, When 'tis excessive in the Measure and Degree.

*Secondly*, In the Length and Continuance.

*First*, When 'tis excessive in the Measure and Degree; as it may be deem'd.

1. When our Sorrows are vented in impatient Murmurs and indecent Reflections upon the Conduct of Divine Providence; as if when our Friends are taken from our Society, God had done an unjust,

---

12 Isa. 57. 1.

13 Jer. 22. 18.

14 Job 27. 13, 14, 15.

\* Nil agis, dolor; quanquam sis molestus, nunquam te esse confitebor malum.

\* *Epist.* 63. Inter exempla eorum sui quos dolor vicit.

an unmerciful, or an unwise Act. This is very criminal; for hereby we affront him in his moral Perfections, and seem to dispute with him about the Rights of his Godhead; forgetting that he is our absolute Sovereign, and has an original and unalienable Right in us and ours. For as it was merely an Act of his Choice to give us a Being, all his subsequent Bounties can have no other Original than his own good Pleasure. And since he bestows his Favours upon us without our Merit, he may justly, when he pleases, recal 'em without our leave; for his fundamental Right in us and our Friends, skreens him from the least shadow of Injustice, when by Death he removes them from us. So that if while we are mourning for our deceas'd Friends, we permit our Passions to mutiny, so as to utter any unbecoming Reflections on the Skilfulness of the Divine Hand; 'tis a strong evidence that our Sorrows are too excessive.

And this kind of Excess and Impatience seems to have overcome *David*, when in the most mournful Accents, and in an uncommon Strain, he laments the tragical End of his rebellious Son *Absalom*, as the Text informs us: *The King was much moved, and went up to the Chamber over the Gate, and wept; and as he went, thus he said, O my Son Absalom, my Son, my Son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my Son, my Son!*<sup>15</sup> But,

2. We sorrow like those without hope, when our Grief does so ruffle our Minds and enfeeble our Bodies, as to render us incapable to discharge the special Duties of our Relation and Place, and to exercise those Graces which are eminently useful, and very necessary to be called forth into act, in a time of solemn Mourning and deep Sadness. If the Mind be greatly pensive, and thrown into a convulsive Agony, and do long continue so, Sadness and Disorder will appear in the Countenance; for the Laws of Union betwixt Body and Soul are so strict, that 'tis impossible for the Faculties of the Mind to be indispos'd, but the Organs of the Body will be sensible of it, and suffer by it. For as any Injury done to the Body occasions painful Sensations in the Mind, so a violent hurry of the Powers and Passions of the Soul will soon abate the strength of the Body; which while it declines and languishes, increases the disorder of the Spirit: so that by an unaccountable Sympathy they become Partners in each other's Sorrows, and mutually hinder the performance of Holy Duties, and the exercise of Faith, Hope and Patience. For the mutiny of our Passions sends up such Vapours as thicken into a Cloud; which fitting on the Understanding, do so confound the Apprehension, both with regard to the Actings of these Graces, and the Objects upon which they are to terminate, that they are like a musical Instrument that is unstrung, and so unfit for use. Indeed there is no time more proper for the acting our suffering Graces, than a Day of Gloom and thick Darkness. But alas! this cannot be perform'd while the Mind is under Confusion and Horror, and the animal Spirits exhausted by continual sighing. Therefore when we give so large a vent to our Sorrows, as to impair the Health of our Bodies, and impede the Exercise of our Graces, we sorrow like those that have no hope.

3. When our Grief for our deceased Friends is greater than for those Sins which might be the occasion of God's removing them so suddenly from us. There is hardly any afflictive Providence, but is properly a Reproof and Correction for Sin. Now if the smart of our Afflictions gives a deeper accent to our Sorrow than the guilt of our Sins; if we are more griev'd for the loss of our Friend than for the visible tokens of the Divine Anger, then our mourning is criminal. Indeed that Person must be very Stoical who can bear the loss of an agreeable Friend, without dropping a few Tears, and sending some Sighs after him; but he is no less to blame, that can conceive a greater Sorrow in his Soul for the loss of an outward Comfort, than for Sin the sad cause of God's snatching it from him. Moreover, 'tis a certain sign that God was not valu'd by such a one as the supreme, all-comprehending Good if any temporal Loss does more afflict his Soul than the Sins that occasion'd it.

---

15 2 Sam. 18. 33.

4. We sorrow as those without hope for our departed Friends, when our Grief is more pungent and afflictive for the loss of them, than for God's withdrawing his gracious and quickning Presence, and hiding his Face from as in an angry Cloud. The Smiles of God are better, and more to be valued than the best Life of any Creature: therefore to be less concern'd when he frowns upon our Souls; than when he removes from us the Comforts of Life, does not only discover the disorderly excess of our Grief, but the defect of our Judgment, in setting a higher value on a dying Creature than an everliving God. But I hasten to the second Head.

*Secondly*, They may be said to sorrow as those without hope, that exceed in the continuance of their Sorrows, rejecting all solid grounds of Comfort, as did several whose Names are inroll'd in sacred Story. I'll instance in a few: Good old *Jacob*, upon the apprehension of *Joseph's* death, *rends his Clothes, puts Sackcloth upon his Loins, and mourn'd for his Son many days*: his Passion so got the start of his Reason, that he refus'd to be comforted, and resolv'd to mourn till he died, abandoning himself to the most desperate Sorrow.<sup>16</sup> And thus *Rachel* is describ'd by the Prophet, *as weeping for her Children, and refusing to be comforted, because they were not.*<sup>17</sup> And *Rizpah* continued by the dead Bodies of her Sons, and would not willingly be remov'd from them.<sup>18</sup> And there are not a few Christians who are too apt to slide into these Excesses upon the death of their near Relations, as if all their Happiness was vanish'd and gone, when the delight of their Eyes is sunk into a Grave out of their sight: which immoderate Sorrow is a continued Reflection on the Divine Attributes, as if a God of infinite Wisdom and immense Goodness were incapable of making up the loss of a mutable mortal Creature.

Moreover, let me remark that the invincible Patience, and profound Submission of some Heathens under the most afflicting Providences, condemn the Practice of those Christians who incessantly mourn for their departed Friends, and refuse to be comforted. I'll mention but one in the room of several, and 'tis that of *Stilpon* the Philosopher, who when the City where he liv'd was reduc'd to Ashes, and his Wife and Children buried in the common Ruins, himself escaping alone from the Fire, being ask'd whether he had loft any thing? replied, \* *All my Treasure's with me, Justice, Virtue, Temperance, Prudence, and this inviolable Principle, not to esteem any thing as my proper Good that can be ravish'd from me.* An Instance that very much upbraids those Christians who are intemperate either in the degree or duration of their Grief. Some time is necessary and decent for our funeral Sorrows: but to walk softly all our days in deep mourning and anguish of Spirit, because our Friends are taken from us, and made more happy than ever they were with us, is to grieve like stupid *Jews*, or hopeless Heathens; who both disbelieve the Resurrection of Christ, which is the Foundation, Model, and Pledg of ours.

Therefore that this Dissuasive of the Apostle may make a sutable Impression upon our Minds, let us now consider the Arguments he uses to inforce it, which is the

III<sup>d</sup> General Head: And here are two things to be insisted upon.

*First*, The Nature of their Death who die united to Christ; 'tis represented under the soft Character of a *Sleep*.

*Secondly*, The great Advantage that follows their Death; such as *sleep in Jesus will God bring with him*.

---

16 Gen. 37. 34, 35.

17 Jer. 31. 15.

18 2 Sam. 21. 10.

\* *Senec. Epist. 9.* Omnia bona mea mecum sunt, Justitia, Virtus, Temperantia, Prudentia, hoc ipsum nihil boni putare quod eripi possit.



*First*, The Nature of their Death who are united to Christ, 'tis call'd a Sleep; *Those that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him*. An excellent \* Author on this Text observes how the Apostle varies the Expression: "Jesus died, but the Saints sleep in him; for he sustained Death in all its Terrors, that it might be a calm Sleep to his People."

Under the Old Testament we find the Death of the Saints frequently set forth by this soft and gentle Character. *David* and *Solomon*, *Jehoshaphat* and *Hezekiah* are represented at their Death to be fallen asleep.

And under the New Testament our Lord uses this Phrase upon the death of one whom he lov'd, *Our Friend Lazarus sleepeth*.<sup>19</sup> And 'twas *St. Paul's* usual idiom to call Death a Sleep, as appears from the Scriptures in the Margin\*. Some indeed have been so weak as to imagine that this Sleep did equally seize Soul and Body, and have asserted, that at death the Soul passes into a state of Inactivity, and sleepeth with the Body till the Resurrection; an Opinion so repugnant to the true Principles of Philosophy and Divine Revelation, that 'tis seldom espous'd by any but Atheists, Socinians, and very ignorant Pretenders to Religion.

Our Souls are of an immortal nature, they neither die nor sleep, but immediately upon the death of our Bodies *return to God that gave 'em*,<sup>20</sup> and are fix'd in a state of Happiness or Misery. Had not the Apostle believ'd this, we cannot imagine that he would have esteem'd Death to be gain to him; or that he would have been in any strait to determine and fix his choice, for present Death or longer Life: for the latter would have been much more eligible, if he had believ'd that his Soul at death would have been as insensible and unactive as his Body; and no doubt but he would rather have desir'd to continue in this World, where he had enjoy'd Communion with Christ, and often seen him by a steady eye of Faith, than to be hurried out of it by Death, and render'd utterly incapable of any enjoyment of his Redeemer till the Resurrection. But 'tis yet more evident from another Expression of our Apostle, that he was very far from the Opinion, or rather Dream of the Soul's sleeping with the Body till the Resurrection: His words are these; *We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord*.<sup>21</sup> *q. d.* We have good courage, and are well arm'd against the fears of Death, being well assur'd that we shall have upon our Dissolution an immediate admittance into the Presence of our glorified Lord: for the Apostle supposes not only that the Soul is capable of existing while separated from the Body, and of exercising her Faculties and Powers in such a state; but that so soon as she leaves the Body, she shall enter into the presence of Christ, and behold his Glory.

But I pass on, and shall briefly represent the force of the Apostle's Arguments against immoderate Sorrow for the dead.

The first of which is taken from the Nature of their Death who die in the Lord; 'tis describ'd by the soft Character of a *Sleep*, which, as you have heard, refers only to the Body. Now the Death of the Righteous may be thus set forth on the following accounts.

1. Because the Body is then eased of all its Pains, and freed from all Fatigue and Toil to which it was expos'd while animated with the Soul; and therefore as Death is compar'd to Sleep, so the Grave is compar'd to a Bed, where the righteous are said to rest.<sup>22</sup> In this Life the best of Men are frequently made uneasy by acute Distempers and corroding Pains; and Death is frequently sought

---

\* Dr Bates. (WHO IS THIS?)

19 Joh. 11. 11.

\* 1 Cor. 15. 6, 18, 20, 51.

20 Eccles. 12. 7.

21 2 Cor. 5. 8.

22 Isa. 57. 2.

for, because Life is a burden. You that have frequently visited the Chambers of the sick, cannot surely have forgotten the sighs of those Prisoners who have groan'd upon Beds of Down, as if every part of their Bodies had been violently extended on a Rack. It would be endless to reckon up the vast number of Diseases that affect the Children of God in this World: for being tainted with original Sin, as well as the vilest of the People, they may expect the same Distempers; and tho they tarry here but a few days, they are ordinarily full of trouble, and if their Bodies are not often indispos'd, yet thro the Malice of Enemies, and the Miseries and Unkindnesses of their Friends, they are frequently made to bow towards the Grave before they drop into it. For indeed the best of our earthly Comforts have their hidden stings, but they shall give us no more pain and uneasiness after we are fallen asleep in Jesus: *For in the Grave the wicked cease from troubling; there the weary be at rest; there the Prisoners rest together, they hear not the voice of the Oppressor.*<sup>23</sup>

2. In Sleep no labour is expected from the Body; so when Believers are overtaken with a mortal slumber, Christ expects no Service from their Bodies. While the Soul continues united to the Body, we are oblig'd to yield the Members of the one, as well as the Faculties of the other, as *Instruments of Righteousness unto God.*<sup>24</sup> But in a state of separation there is expected neither Service nor Suffering from the Body. So that while we continue on the Stage of this World, the Advice of the Wise-Man is very proper: *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no Work, nor Device, nor Knowledg, nor Wisdom in the Grave whither thou goest.*<sup>25</sup> All our vital and animal Operations shall cease when our Spirits return to God, and our Bodies are reduc'd to Dust. The one is fix'd in an unalterable state of Happiness or Misery, and the other put into an incapacity for Action.

A middle place betwixt Heaven and Hell for departed Spirits is a groundless Imagination; for it could not be said with truth, that such as die in the Lord *rest from their Labours,*<sup>26</sup> if they were to pass into a refining Fire, equally tormenting in degree, but not in duration with that of Hell, as those of the *Roman Faction* assert. Therefore let us rather attend to the words of our Lord, and follow his Example: *I must work the Works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh when no Man can work.*<sup>27</sup>

3. Death to the Righteous is disarm'd of its sting; and being alter'd in its nature, it may suitably be set forth by the notion of Sleep. St. *Paul* tells us, that *the sting of Death is Sin, and the strength of Sin is the Law.*<sup>28</sup> Death receives its destroying Power from Sin, and Sin from the Law; Sin being a Transgression of the Law, which discovers its odious nature, and denounces Damnation for it. But Death approaches Believers without its sting, Christ having yielded an indefective Obedience to the Law, and suffer'd the penalty of it in the room and stead of Believers. Hence says the Apostle, *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.*<sup>29</sup> *Christ hath redeem'd 'em from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for them.*<sup>30</sup> And the Apostle represents Believers as triumphing over Death in such terms as these; *O Death, where is thy Sting? O Grave, where is thy Victory? -- Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*<sup>31</sup> Christ has remov'd the scandal of Death by dying, and perfum'd the Grave by lying in it, and passing through it.

---

23 Job 3. 17, 18.

24 Rom. 6. 13.

25 Eccles. 9. 10.

26 Rev. 14. 13.

27 Joh. 9. 4.

28 1 Cor. 15. 56.

29 Rom. 8. 1.

30 Gal. 3. 13.

31 1 Cor. 15. 55, 57.

4. The Death of the Righteous is compar'd to a Sleep, on the account of what shall follow thereupon: for as men do awake after Sleep, so they shall revive after Death, as we are assur'd by a very remarkable Prophecy and Promise; *I will ransom them from the Power of the Grave, I will redeem them from Death: O Death, I will be thy Plagues; O Grave, I will be thy Destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.*<sup>32</sup> In which words we are to consider the Prophet as personating Christ, and uttering the Triumphs of a mighty Conqueror: which contain a glorious Promise to all the Elect of a Victory over Death, which shall be partially accomplish'd at the time of their Dissolution, but finally consummated in the day of the Resurrection: *for Death hath not such a power over the living, nor the Grave over the dead, as Christ hath over both, to destroy the one, and swallow up the other in victory.*

These several things laid together, compose a very solid Argument to dissuade from immoderate Sorrow for those that sleep in Jesus. But this leads to the

Second Argument which the Apostle urges upon the same account, which is drawn from the great advantage that shall follow the death of the Righteous: *Such as sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.*

Which either supposes or implies these several things:

*First*, That Jesus Christ, who is God-Man, will make his second Appearance or Coming at the end of the World. I understand God in my Text personally for the Son: *To them that look for him* (says the Author to the *Hebrews*) *shall he appear the second time without Sin unto Salvation.*<sup>33</sup> There is a double Coming of Christ mentioned in Scripture; the first in the Form of a Servant, the second with all the Glory of an Incarnate God: At his first coming he was despised and rejected of Men, but at his second *every knee shall bow to him, of things in Heaven, of things on Earth, and things under the Earth; and every Tongue confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*<sup>34</sup> At his first coming he conceal'd his Glory by the Veil of his Flesh; but at his second he designs to manifest and display it in the most bright and majestick manner. At his first coming into this World he was entertain'd in a Stable, and when he went out of it he expir'd upon an infamous Tree; but when he comes again, he will appear in the Clouds seated on a *great white Throne*, the Emblem of his unspotted Holiness and regal Authority. At his first coming, he was reproach'd and despis'd of the People; but when he comes a second time, his Enemies shall be struck with a defenceless silence. And tho some may be ready to say, our Lord delays his coming, because he has been conceal'd from their sight for several Ages by the Curtains of Heaven, yet know, it will not be long e'er he that shall come will come, and will not tarry; the Curtains shall shortly be drawn, and the Scenes of Glory shall open: 'tis as certain that he will come, as if the Event was past, or as if we now saw the Heavens open, and he moving towards us in the Chariot of a bright Cloud. But, Lord, what will his Enemies do in the great Day of his Wrath! how will they bear the lightning of his Eyes, the smoke of his Breath, the thunder of his Voice, the weight of his Arm, and the terrors of his Wrath; who have despised his Grace, blasphem'd his Person, and spurn'd at the sounding Bowels of his Love?

*Secondly*, It implies the Resurrection of their Bodies who sleep in Jesus. Christ cannot bring them with him in the Clouds of Heaven, unless he first fetch them from the bowels of the Earth, and the bottom of the Sea; for at the sound of the last Trump, all the Elements shall give up their Dead. Believers shall not always continue under the power of Death, but shall be reviv'd incorruptible and immortal. Indeed to Reason, not improv'd by the supernatural Light of Divine Revelation, it seems

---

32 Hos. 13. 14.

33 Heb. 9. 28.

34 Phil. 2. 9, 10, 11.

an incredible thing that God should raise the Dead.<sup>35</sup> *Pliny* reciting those things which he thought not to be in the Power of God, mentions these two, *Mortales æternitate donare, aut revocare defunctos*; *Lib. 2. cap. 7*. And tho there are various things in Nature which are shadows of the Resurrection, yet I am inclined to think they would never have convinc'd us of it, had not the Scripture reveal'd it to us. The Earth has been represented as a kind of Grave or Sepulcher to the vegetable World; where (as one observes) the vital Powers are sealed up and stifled all the Winter,<sup>36</sup> and yet at Spring are actuated, expand and send forth a lively Verdure. So a Grain of Corn is not quicken'd, except it rot and die. Our sleep every night is the Image of Death, and our awaking in the morning a Shadow of the Resurrection. Now altho from these circular Revolutions of Nature, a probable Argument for the Resurrection may be drawn; yet those that are certain and concluding, are only to be fetch'd from the Fountain of Truth, *The sure Word of Prophecy*. And if it should be said, that several Heathens believ'd the Resurrection of the Body; that may be accounted for two ways; either Tradition might hand it down from *Noah*, or they might gain light in this Doctrine by conversing with the Writings of the *Old Testament*: for I think nothing is more evident, than that a great many Heathen Authors have borrowed the brighter Notions that adorn their Books, from the inspir'd Writings of *Moses* and the Prophets, as several Learned Men have abundantly prov'd. So that I say, the only infallible assurance we have of the Resurrection of the Body, is founded on Divine Revelation.

It will therefore be necessary that I recite a few passages of Scripture before I proceed. The first I shall mention is the words of *Job*: *I know that my Redeemer liveth; and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the Earth. And tho after my skin Worms destroy this Body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for my self, and my eyes shall behold, and not another; tho my reins be consumed within me.*<sup>37</sup> Which Text, tho by some understood of a providential Resurrection, yet I think not without some force upon it: for I cannot see any necessity of taking it in a figurative and improper sense. I am sure that *St. Clement*, who was not only contemporary with *St. Paul* the Apostle, but his Companion and Fellow-labourer, in his first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, cites this Text to prove the Resurrection of the Body, and understands it in a literal proper sense. But that passage which is yet more plain and full, is the words of our Blessed Saviour: *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, to the Resurrection of Damnation.*<sup>38</sup> Which Text is so expressive of the Resurrection of the Body, that it needs no Comment. It also proves that the very same Body that fell by Death, shall arise again; for if it be not the very same Body which was laid in the Grave that is call'd forth by Christ's powerful Voice, 'tis not properly a Resurrection, but a new Production of the same specifick Being. But when I speak of the Resurrection of the *Body*, I assert that there shall not only be rais'd the same specifical, but the same numerical *Body*; not only the same *Body* for kind, but for substance: not that I affirm that every individual Particle that compos'd the Body when it died, shall be rais'd up again, but so much of the Matter that made up the necessary constituent parts of it. Now of what is necessary, I think an ingenious Modern gives a very probable account; his words are these: "By necessary Parts, *says he*, I mean those which remain after the utmost degree of Maceration, without which the *Body* would not be integral, but imperfect. And these are chiefly the Bones, the Skin, the Nerves, the Tendons, the Ligaments, and the Substance of the several Vessels. As long as these and all that are necessary to Life remain, the *Body* is truly whole, tho never so much macerated."<sup>39</sup>

---

35 Acts 26. 8.

36 Mr. Beconsal.

37 Job 19. 25, 26.

38 John 5. 28, 29.

39 *Dr. Hody*.

But before I go off from this Head, I would make a remark upon one Phrase, which is within the compass of my Text, and I think proves the Identity of the dying and rising *Body*; and that is Death's being set forth by Sleep, which would be very improper, if the very *Bodies* that sleep in Jesus and are dead, should not be awaken'd and reviv'd in the morning of the Resurrection.

There is but one thing more I shall stay to mention, farther to support this important Article; and 'tis the instance given by the Apostle of those that shall be alive at Christ's second coming: he tells us, *they shall not all sleep, but they shall all be chang'd.*<sup>40</sup> Now this Change must refer to the Qualities of their *Bodies*, not to the Substance of them: we cannot imagine that by being chang'd, he means that the whole Substance of their *Bodies* should be annihilated, and that they shall have quite new *Bodies* form'd out of other matter. Moreover let me observe, that should those very *Bodies* be destroy'd, and new ones united to those Souls, the destruction of the *Body* and the breach of the union would be Death; whereas the Apostle asserts, *all shall not die.* So that upon the whole I argue thus: That if those Persons who are found alive at Christ's second coming shall retain their old *Bodies* only with new Qualities, then those that are rais'd from the Dead shall have the same *Bodies* which were formerly join'd to their Souls, only with the addition of new Qualities. For what reason can any man assign, that the Saints who shall be alive when Christ shall come to judg the World, should he caught up into the Air with their old *Bodies* only ennobled and refin'd, and those that died should have *Bodies* intirely new, and such as were never united to their Souls before, such as never were the Instruments either of sinning, or serving of God?

Now the Apostle does not barely tell us of the Saints being brought with God our Saviour at his Appearing and Kingdom, which implies their Resurrection, but he shews that their Resurrection depends upon the Death and Resurrection of our Blessed Saviour: for says he, *If we believe that Jesus dy'd and rose again, even so them also that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.*

*First*, Upon his death: *for thro death Christ hath destroy'd him that had the power of Death, that is the Devil.*<sup>41</sup> When men were doom'd to death for the breach of the Law, Christ changed conditions with them, and offer'd up his *precious Blood*<sup>42</sup> as a Ransom to God for them; so that our Saviour was victorious in dying, and conquer'd as he expir'd on the infamous Tree. He bruis'd the head of the old Serpent, and silenc'd the *Anathema's* of a broken Law; when in the sharpest Agony, and amidst a thousand torments, he bowed his head and gave up the Ghost. I confess that his own Exaltation and Triumphs began with his Resurrection; but if there had not been an infinite satisfying Merit in his Death, he had been so fast fetter'd with the bonds of Death, that he could never have burst them: but having offer'd a Sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour to God, which was of infinite worth and consideration, the Pains of Death were loos'd, for 'twas impossible he should be held by them:<sup>43</sup> naturally impossible, because of his irresistible Power as God; legally impossible, because he had paid the full Demands of the Law and Justice.

*Secondly*, Our Resurrection from the Grave depends on the Resurrection of Christ. Christ's Resurrection from the dead proves that ours is not only possible, but infallibly certain. And this St. Paul reasons upon in a very convincing manner: *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?*<sup>44</sup> *q.d.* How can any deny either the possibility or certainty of the Resurrection of the *Body*, since Christ has evidenced both by his own Resurrection from the Dead? Christ has remov'd both the moral and natural impossibility of our revival after death, the one by his abundant Merit, and the other by his own

---

40 1 Cor. 15. 51.

41 Heb. 2. 14.

42 1 Pet. 1. 19.

43 Acts 2.24.

44 1 Cor. 15. 12

triumphant Resurrection: for having taken away the guilt of our Sins which is the cause of Death, Death which is the consequent of Sin shall be destroy'd and swallow'd up in victory. And our Lord declares, *That he is the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in me (says he) tho he were dead, yet shall he live.*<sup>45</sup> *q.d.* I am, and shall be the principal cause of the Resurrection, my voice shall break the silence of the Grave, and cause those that sleep in the dust to awake and live again. He is also said to be *the first fruits of them that sleep*. And says the same Apostle, *For since by man came Death, by man came also the Resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*<sup>46</sup>

From all which we may collect, that our Saviour's Resurrection is the Pledg and Assurance of ours. *For if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that rais'd up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*<sup>47</sup> In a word, Christ rose from the dead as a publick Person, as the Surety and Head of his Church; and because he lives, we shall live also. And being called *the first-born among the dead*, he owns all that have dy'd in the Faith as his Brethren, who shall be restored to Life according to his excellent Pattern; for his Resurrection is not only the Pledg, but the Model of ours. Therefore we are expressly told, *That he shall change our vile Body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious Body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*<sup>48</sup> How glorious our Lord is in his exalted human Nature, cannot fully be represented by the most graceful turns of Language, and lofty figures of Speech; therefore we must be content with very imperfect *Ideas* of his Glory, till we have the happiness to see him as he is. Yet we have enough reveal'd concerning it, to invigorate our desires, and raise our wonder: *His Eyes are represented like a flame of fire; his Voice as the sound of many waters; his Feet like to fine brass, as if they burn'd in a furnace; his Countenance as the Sun shining in its full strength.*<sup>49</sup> Now after this bright Pattern shall the Bodies of the Saints be form'd in the Resurrection. O what proportion of Parts! what agreeableness of Colour! how radiant an Air shall sit upon their Countenance! for they shall shine with a lustre exceeding the brightness of all the Lamps of Heaven.<sup>50</sup> The Apostle also assures us, that *tho they are sown natural, they shall be rais'd spiritual Bodies; i.e.* the Matter of 'em shall be exalted and improv'd to an extraordinary degree of fineness: for Matter is properly enough said to be spiritual when 'tis much refin'd. And how great a Difference may we observe in material things? for instance, betwixt the animal Spirits in the Brain, and the grosser Parts of the Body; betwixt a Lump of Clay, and the refin'd Matter of the Air; betwixt the Earth, and the Sun that shines upon it; yet all material Substances: from which we may collect what Christ can do to exalt and refine our Bodies in the Resurrection. But farther, they may be called Spiritual, in that they will be much better fitted to serve our Spirits than they are now. Here our Bodies are oftentimes a Clog and Hindrance to us; but in the Resurrection they shall be like Wings to our Souls, or to use the Phrase of the Antients, *They shall be as a Celestial Chariot to the Soul*; they shall neither be the Cause of our Ignorance, nor of our Sinning, as they are now; they shall not hinder, but rather help forward our Devotions. In a word, they shall never suffer nor die more, for they shall be rais'd immortal and incorruptible; the one respects a Deliverance from Death, the other a freedom from Diseases: so that Incorruptibility is an addition to the Happiness of immortal Creatures; for if Persons should never die, yet if they were often diseased, their Happiness would be incompleat: but the rais'd Bodies of the Saints shall never know any more Sorrow, Sickness, or Death; it shall not be in the power of any Creature to disorder the curious Contexture of the rais'd Bodies. Mortality then will be swallowed up of Life; *This corruptible shall put on Incorruption, and this mortal Immortality.*<sup>51</sup>

---

45 Joh. 11. 25.

46 1 Cor. 15. 20, 21, 22.

47 Rom 8. 11.

48 Phil. 3. 21.

49 Rev. 1. 15. [Revelation 1:15, 16].

50 Mar. 15. 43. Dan. 12. 2, 3. [it appears the reference to Mark 15:43 is an error, *Ed.*]

51 1 Cor. 15. 53.

*Thirdly*, The Saints being brought with Christ at his second Coming, does not only suppose their Resurrection, but that with their rais'd Bodies they shall ascend up into the Air. And so much the Apostle asserts a little after my Text; *For this we say unto you by the Word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep – For we shall be caught up together with them in the Clouds, to meet the Lord in the Air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*<sup>52</sup> Whether those that are rais'd from the dead, and those that shall be chang'd who never died, shall be caught up into the Air by the immediate attractive Power of Christ, or by the Ministry of Angels, I will not determine; but that they shall ascend in order to their coming with him, is beyond all dispute: and probably their Bodies may be so refin'd, that they may be capable of treading Air, and mounting upwards as easily as they now move upon the Earth.

*Fourthly*, Being brought with Christ at his second Coming, shall be to illustrate the Glory of our incarnate God, and to advance the Happiness of his redeemed ones. They shall attend their Lord's Triumph, and make up a part of his magnificent Retinue: for as he shall come *to be admir'd in all those that believe,*<sup>53</sup> so they shall all share in his Glory; they will then know by experience, what riches of Glory is comprehended in that Promise and Privilege, of being *Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with Jesus Christ*. O what a glorious Procession will this be through the Air! when he that suffered upon the infamous Tree, shall appear at the head of so long and bright a Train! when all that the Father gave to him, shall appear with glittering Crowns and spreading Palms, the Rewards of Grace, and the Tokens of Victory!

I proceed now to make some improvement of what I have said. And,

*First*, This Doctrine that I have deliver'd, discovers to us the Excellency of the Christian Institution: *Life and Immortality is brought to light by the Gospel*. All that has been said by Heathen Poets and Philosophers concerning a Future State, was but obscure Conjecture to the shining Revelation of the Gospel They understood not that the Sting of Death was remov'd by the Sufferings of the Redeemer, or that the Body should be rais'd with a transcendent Lustre and Dignity, to receive a Reward with the Soul. Yea, under the Mosaick Oeconomy, a future State was but obscurely reveal'd; but under the Dispensation of the Gospel, we have a most charming Landskip of Heaven, and the way to obtain it is set in the most clear and certain Light.

*Secondly*, This Doctrine may be improv'd to guard good Men against the slavish Fears of Death. Why should the Righteous be afraid to repose upon a Bed of Dust? Death is but a Sleep, from which we shall be awaken'd in the Morning of the Resurrection; and Christ, as you have heard, hath disarm'd Death of its Sting, and alter'd it in its very nature to the Righteous. I confess, I do not wonder that the Wicked and Profane are afraid of Death, for they know it puts a period to their Pleasures, and begins their Torments; it snatches them from the Joys of Life, and fixes 'em under the Agonies of the second Death. So that some not only fear Death it self, but the very Name of it is terrible: which occasion'd a Prince that I have read of, to forbid the mention of it in all his Court. Yea, so enslav'd are some by the fear of Death, that they conceive an Abhorrence at the sight of a Coffin, the dress of Mourners, and the Solemnities of a Funeral; which (as one says) are only the Outguards that make up the Retinue of the King of Terrors.

'Tis reported of *Alexander*, who had often encounter'd the numerous Armies of the *Asian* Monarchs, and despis'd the Terror of Battels, yet when he was seiz'd with a mortal Disease in *Babylon*, he was so afraid of Death, that his Court was fill'd with Diviners and Victims, and all the

---

52 1 Thess. 4. 15, 17.

53 2 Thess. 1. 10.

little arts of Superstition were us'd to preserve his Life. And indeed all Men have just reason to fear Death, who have nothing but a gloomy Prospect beyond it, the terrible Apprehensions of an angry God, and a tormenting *Tophet*.<sup>54</sup> But such whose Guilt, is remov'd by the Blood of Christ, and their Souls renew'd and cleans'd by the Spirit of Christ, have no reason to fear Death, for it approaches 'em without a Sting.

*Thirdly*, From the Doctrine I have establish'd, we learn of what necessity it is to be united to Christ; for 'tis only such that shall have part in the first Resurrection, over whom the second Death shall have no power: 'tis only such as die in the Lord, *i.e.* united to Christ by the Spirit and Faith, that are said to sleep in Jesus, and that God our Saviour will bring with him. I know that some Men think themselves *very witty*, when they ridicule the Doctrine of Union with Christ; but I am sure they are *very miserable*, if we may take the word of an Apostle for it, who says, *that if any Man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*.<sup>55</sup> Now none but such as belong to Christ shall attend his Triumph at the Last Day, and reign with him in his immovable Kingdom.

*Fourthly*, How great are our Obligations to our Redeemer, who hath alter'd the very nature of Death by dying in our stead, and given us assurance of our Resurrection by his own rising from the dead? O the Heights, the Depths, the Lengths, the Breadths of the Love of God in Christ Jesus! Shall not our Hearts burn with a grateful Flame! and shall not his unexampled Love render him exceeding precious to our Souls, and cause us to strike up with the Church Triumphant, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive Power, and Riches, and Wisdom, and Strength, and Honour, and Glory, and Blessing, for ever and ever!*<sup>56</sup>

*Fifthly*, How little reason have those that are united to Christ, to desire any long tarry in this World, which is a sink of Sin and Sorrow, a place of Gloominess and Darkness; where we constantly suffer, and are always in danger of sinning? Moreover, while here, we are kept from our Inheritance and our Father's House: Therefore it better becomes a true Member of Christ's Mystical Body, to desire rather *to depart, and to be with Christ, which is best of all*.

*Sixthly*, How great is the Difference betwixt the Death of a Believer and that of an Infidel? "They may both fall by the same Diseases, and their Dust be mingled in the same Pit; but their immortal Part will be everlastingly divided: There is a great Gulf fixed between the Spirits in Prison, and the Souls in Paradise."<sup>57</sup> We read that when the rich Man died, *in Hell he lift up his Eyes, being in Torments*;<sup>58</sup> but when the religious Beggar left this World, *he was carried by Angels into Abraham's Bosom*. An impenitent Sinner at Death loses the very Shadows that he courted for Happiness; but the Saint heightens his Felicity into Perfection. *Mark the perfect Man, and behold the upright; for the end of that Man is peace*.<sup>59</sup>

*Lastly*, If such as sleep in Jesus, God will bring with him, then let us not sorrow like those without hope when God removes our Relations and Friends by death, especially such whom we have good ground to believe are fallen asleep in Jesus, as bless'd be God we have of that excellent and worthy Gentleman Mr. *ABBOTT*, whose Death has given the sad occasion to this Discourse. And is he dead? Well, but his Name lives, and will be fresh and fragrant to Posterity. And I cannot do Justice to his Memory, without taking notice of those Graces and Virtues that eminently shin'd in his Conversation and Conduct; for *the Memory of the Just shall be blessed and the Righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance*.

---

54 Insert definition

55 Rom. 8. 9.

56 Rev. 5. 12.

57 *Mr. Cruso*.

58 Luke 16. 22, 23.

59 Psal. 37. 37.



I am not now to give the Character of one that dwelt in a Shade, but of one whose publick Implies expos'd him to continual View; so that I doubt not of a crowd of Witnesses to attest the Truth of what I shall say. I confess, to collect all that was excellent and imitable in the deceas'd Gentleman, is too big a task for so unskilful a Person as I am; who can but lay the dead Colours of his Character, and must leave the finishing Strokes to more artful Hands, to Men of better Judgment, of greater compass of Thought, and exactness of Stile. I must own I am at a loss where to begin, and what part of his excellent Character I shall insist upon; but I think his Piety towards God may properly enough be spoken of in the first place.

He began very early to be religious, devoted to Heaven the flourishing Bloom of his Youth, the first and best of his time; he had well studied and digested the great Articles of the Christian Faith, and had right Notions of the Person and Mediatory Work of Christ, which had a mighty Influence into his whole Conversation: for tho he liv'd in a crowd and hurry of Business, yet he lost not his Religion in the midst of it, but kept close to the private and publick Duties of Divine Worship.

With what Seriousness and Diligence did he attend on Sermons, and what Pains did he take in the writing and repeating of them? which was the more extraordinary, because his publick Implies engag'd him in writing even to Toil and Fatigue.

He was not a Gentleman that affected Singularity, or pretended to more Purity than other Christians; but there was a native Gracefulness that attended his Acts of Piety and Devotion, which he manag'd without Pomp, or Noise: this was an evidence of his great Humility, a Grace very conspicuous in him, as some of the poorest in this place cannot but have observ'd, to whom he carried it as if they had been his Equals; which added a mighty Lustre to the rest of his Virtues.

His Zeal for spreading the great Truths of the Gospel was strong and regular, bright and flaming; for notwithstanding his many necessary Avocations, he would redeem time to advise and assist in the promotion of substantial Godliness.

His Sincerity was very extraordinary and visible, for he appear'd always with great Freedom, Simplicity and Plainness in Conversation; he detested all Reserves and Disguises, 'twas too mean for him to appear in Masquerade, tho Alamode:<sup>60</sup> Integrity preserv'd him from the meanness of Flattery, and he preserv'd his Integrity amidst a thousand Temptations.

He was a true *Nathanael*, who by the Grace of God (abating the common Frailtys of human Life) might be said to *keep himself unspotted from the World*; for he acted like *Joseph* in the Court of *Pharaoh*, only with this difference, that he had not learn'd to swear by his Life.

In his Family he was very exemplary, gave great encouragement to the beginnings of Piety, but deeply resented the negligence of Servants or Children that should absent themselves from Family-worship.

The Company he most delighted in, was such where he might either do good, or receive it; and indeed I may say, that (like the Master he serv'd) *he went about doing good*: for as he sought out Objects to exercise his Charity upon, so he would thank his particular Friends when they told him of any that were deserving of his Alms, and would as chearfully relieve 'em in the most generous and noble manner. He was never deaf to the Complaints of the Poor and Miserable, nor blind to the Marks of their Poverty; neither did he shut his Heart, his Purse, or his Door against 'em: he did not

---

60 Define here

only wish 'em well, and give them soft Language, but afforded them solid Supplies. He was truly that liberal Man whom *Solomon* speaks of, that deviseth liberal things: For *as he was created in Christ Jesus to good Works, so he did abound in all the Fruits of Righteousness and Charity, which are by Jesus Christ to the Praise and Glory of God the Father.* And tho he was thus rich in good Works, yet his charitable Distributions were never attended with the sound of a Trumpet, but dispers'd to Multitudes in the most silent and secret way. *He deliver'd the Poor that cry'd, and the Fatherless, and him that had none to help him; the Blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon him, and he caused the Widow's heart to sing for joy.* Yet in all this he observed the Rule of our Saviour as near as possible, *not letting his right hand what his left hand did.*

He gave very liberally, tho very privately, to encourage the bringing up of a Pious and Learned Ministry in *Ireland*; and understanding that such a Design was forming in *London*, he offer'd most generously to encourage it: but before it could be accomplish'd, cruel Death fetter'd those Hands that were always active in dispensing the most noble Charities.

And I think it no contemptible Branch of his Character, that he paid a deference and respect to all that were of the Sacred Order of the Ministry, under what denomination soever they passed: Tho his Ears were not servilely boar'd to any; for he did not look on them as Lords of his Faith, but Helpers of his joy; yet, I say, he was not wanting to afford them the Testimonies of his Respect. He gave liberally to support several Lectures; particularly he encouraged that which is carried on in this Place: for he was a Gentleman of universal Charity to all that bore the Image of Christ.

He was very tender of the Reputation of all Men; and as he could not endure to hear the Follies of Men made a matter of Diversion, so he always deeply resented the Reproaches and Calumnies that are too commonly the Sauce of Conversation, and look'd upon a Man's good Name as too valuable to lie at the Mercy of every Jester: so that I may say he was as free from rash Censures, as he was from deserving 'em.

He was always ready to compose any Difference betwixt contending Parties, which he did with that Dexterity and Impartiality, that the Man was suspected to have a very bad Cause that declin'd his Arbitration.

As to his acquitting himself in his publick Employ, it was with that Honour that few Men in an Age do; he was so little charm'd with the glitter of Wealth, and his Mind was so imbu'd with the Principles of Christian Religion, that he thought it below him to raise his Estate by the mean practices of Craft or Violence, Bribery or Oppression.

He fear'd God and honour'd the King, and did not meddle with those that are given to change: His Loyalty to his present Majesty *William* the King of *Great Britain* and *Ireland*, and the remarkable Services he has done, in contributing towards supporting the Credit of the Nation at a time when it run very low, are too well known to need reciting here.

Should I speak of him as a Husband, a Parent, a Master, or a Friend, I may say without an *Hyperbole*, he had few Equals under Heaven; for never did I see a more affectionate Husband, tender Father, pleasant and faithful Friend. Yet all these things that I have mention'd, and a great many more I have not time to name, that are lovely and of good report, could not prevent his being seiz'd with a mortal Sickness: *For what Man is he that liveth, and shall not see Death? Shall he deliver his Soul from the band of the Grave? Selah.*<sup>61</sup>

---

61 Psal. 89. 48.

His Illness was more violent and dangerous than was generally apprehended, till within a day or two before his Death: he then being ask'd concerning his Hopes of Eternal Life, declar'd, *They were fix'd on the Satisfaction and Obedience of Christ, and that upon the Righteousness of the Redeemer alone he rested for the pardon of his Sins and everlasting Happiness.* But immediately after this he grew delirious, and so was render'd incapable of discoursing distinctly concerning Divine Things; yet even while he was thus indispos'd, he desir'd me to pray with him, and told me that he heartily join'd. Indeed a few hours before he dy'd he lay a little compos'd, and we imagin'd that some Revival would have ensu'd; so apt are we to flatter our selves with the belief of that which is the matter of our earnest Wishes. But alas! one hour sunk all expectation of Life, and the next put a Period to it.

Thus liv'd and dy'd that admirable Person whose Decease has occasion'd this Discourse; and tho he be dead, yet he speaketh, and his Works praise him more in the Gate, than I have done from the Pulpit. Is he dead? he is not gone out of the World, but remov'd to a better part of it; he has only chang'd his Place, his Company, and Work.

Therefore you his sorrowful surviving Half, and the rest of his Mourning Friends should not think on him as lost, but as set at liberty; not as decaying amongst the Clods of the Valley, but as shining on an illustrious Throne. Stop your Tears, for were he sensible of your Grief, and capable of making a Pause in the midst of his Hallelujahs, he would say to you that survive, *Weep not for me, but weep for your selves.* Therefore let us all think what Improvement to make of this sudden and surprizing Providence: And those things that 'tis proper to instruct us in, I shall but just name, and conclude. Let this Providence put us on the most serious Consideration; *In the day of adversity consider,* says the wise Man. Let us consider and reflect upon the Vanity and Uncertainty of Human Life; surely when so bright and vigorous a Flame is so suddenly extinguish'd, that Scripture is eminently fulfill'd that says, *Verily Man in his best Estate is altogether Vanity.* Let us learn a holy Indifferency to the things of this World; let us be convinc'd how ineffectual are all kind of means to preserve Life, when the Decree is gone forth. If the Skill of Physicians, if the melting Affection of a Wife, and the fervent Prayers of Ministers could have prevented the Death of our Friend, we had not been mourning here at this time: Therefore let us adore the Sovereignty of God, who acts as he pleases, and gives no account of his Matters to the Children of Men. Let us trust in the Lord, who changeth not, and submit to his disposing Will, which is directed by Wisdom and Love. Finally, prepare to follow; *Be ye also ready:* walk with God while you tarry here, that when he calls you out of this lower World, he may take you into his blissful Presence, and say unto each of you, *Well done, thou good and faithful Servant; thou hast been faithful over a few thing, I will make thee Ruler over many things: enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord.*<sup>62</sup>

---

This text was transcribed from image files generated from the Google Books version of John Piggott's book, *Eleven Sermons Preach'd Upon Special Occasions* (London: John Darby, 1714), 34-78 (<https://books.google.com.au/books?id=ARkHAAAQAAJ>). The original is in the Bodleian Library, Oxford University.

Note: In the original text, there were a number of marginal references (mainly Scripture references). These have been rendered as footnotes in this text. The position of these footnotes were assigned by the transcriber and any inaccuracy in their positioning is his alone.

---

62 Mat. 25.21.

