

1 John iii. 3. Endeavours after holiness are inseparably connected with all rational expectations of blessedness. Will you put an unclean, filthy, defiled thing into the pure hand of the most holy God? O see they be holy, and already accepted in the beloved, or woe to them when they take their leave of those tabernacles they now dwell in. The gracious soul may confidently say then, *Lord Jesus! into thy hand I commend my spirit.* O let all that can say so then, now say,

Thanks be to God for Jesus Christ.

SERMON XXXVII.

CHRIST'S Funeral illustrated, in its Manner, Reasons, and excellent Ends.

JOHN XIX. 41, 42.

Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes, with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore, because of the Jews preparation-day, for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

YOU have heard the last words of dying Jesus commending his spirit into his Father's hands. And now the life of the world hangs dead upon a tree. The light of the world, for a time, muffled up in a dismal cloud. The Sun of Righteousness set in the region and shadow of death. The Lord is dead, and he that wears the keys of the grave at his girdle, is now himself to be locked up in the grave.

All you that are the friends and lovers of Jesus, are this day invited to his funeral: such a funeral as never was since *graves* were first digged. "Come see the place where the Lord lay." There are six remarkable particulars, about this funeral, in these three verses.

1. The preparations that were made for it, and that was mainly in two particulars, viz. the *begging* and *perfuming* of the body. His body could not be buried, till, by begging, his friends had obtained it as a favour from his judge. The dead body was by law in the power of Pilate, who adjudged it to death, as the bodies of those that are hanged, are in the power of the judge to dispose of them as he pleases. And when they had gotten it from Pilate,

they wind it in fine linen clothes with spices. But what need of spices to perfume that blessed body? His own love was perfume enough to keep it sweet in the remembrance of his people to all generations: however, by this they will manifest, as far as they are able, the dear affection they have for him.

2. The *Bearers* that carried his body to its grave, Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus, two secret disciples; they were both men of estate and honour: none could imagine that these would have appeared at a time of so much danger, with such boldness for Christ; that ever they would have gone openly, and boldly to manifest their love to Christ, when dead, who were afraid to come to him (except by night) when he was living. But now a spirit of zeal and courage is come upon them, when those that made greater and more open confessions of him are gone.

3. The *Attendants* who followed the hearse, were the women that followed him out of Galilee: among whom the two Marys, and the mother of Zebedee's children (whom Mark calls Salome) are only named.

4. The grave, or sepulchre, where they laid him: It was in Joseph's new tomb, which he had prepared in a garden near unto Golgotha, where our Lord died. Two things are remarkable about this tomb; it was another's tomb, and it was a new tomb. It was another's; for he had not an house of his own to lay his body in when dead. As he lived in other men's houses, so he lay in another man's tomb; and it was a new tomb, wherein never man was yet laid. Doubtless there was much of providence in this; for had any other been laid there before him, it might have proved an occasion both to shake the credit and slur the glory of his resurrection, by pretending it was some former body, and not the Lord's, that rose out of it. In this also divine Providence had a respect to that prophecy, Isa. liii. 9. which was to be fulfilled at his funeral: "He made his grave with the rich, because he had done no violence," &c.

5. The disposition of the body in that tomb. It is true, there is no mention made of the groans and tears with which they laid him in his sepulchre; yet we may well presume, they were not wanting in plentiful expressions of their sorrow that way; for as they wept, and smote their breasts when he died, Luke xxiii. 48. so no doubt, they laid him with melting hearts, and flowing eyes in his tomb, when dead.

6. And *lastly*, The last remarkable particular in the text, is the solemnity with which his funeral rites were performed, and they were all suitable to his humbled state: it was, indeed, a funeral as decently ordered, as the straits of time, and state of things would then permit; but there was nothing of pomp or outward

state at all observed : few marks of honour set by men upon it ; only the heavens adorned it with divers miraculous works, which in their proper place will be spoken to. Thus was he laid in his grave, *where he continued for three incomplete days and nights in the territories of death*, in the land of darkness and forgetfulness : partly to correspond with Jonah his type, and partly to ascertain the world of the reality of his death. Whence our observation is,

Doct. That the dead body of our Lord Jesus Christ was decently interred by a small number of his own disciples, and continued in the state of the dead for a time.

This observation containing matter of fact, and that so plainly and faithfully delivered to us by the pens of the several evangelists, we need do no more, to prepare it for our use, than to satisfy these two enquiries : why had Christ any funeral at all, since his resurrection was so soon to follow his death ? And what manner of funeral Christ had ?

First, Why had Christ any funeral at all, since he was to rise again from the dead, within that space of time that other men commonly have to lie by the wall before their interment ; and had it continued longer unburied, it could see no corruption, having never been tainted by sin ? Why, though there was no need of it at all upon that account that a funeral is needful for other bodies, yet there were these four weighty ends and reasons for it.

Reason 1. *First*, it was necessary Christ should be buried, *to ascertain his death* ; else it might have been looked upon as a cheat : for, as they were ready enough to impose so gross a cheat upon the world at his resurrection, “ That the disciples came by night, “ and stole him away,” much more would they have denied at once the reality, both of his death and resurrection, had he not been so perfumed and interred. But this cut off all pretensions ; for in their kind of embalming, his mouth, ears and nostrils were all filled with their spices and odours ; bound up in linen, and laid long enough in the tomb to give full assurance to the world of the certainty of his death ; so that there could be no latent principle of life in him. Now, since our eternal life is wrapt up in Christ’s death, it can never be too firmly established. To this, therefore, we may well suppose Providence had special respect in his burial, and the manner of it.

Reason 2. *Secondly*, He must be buried, *to fulfil the types and prophecies that went before*. His abode in the grave was prefigured by Jonah’s abode three days and nights in the belly of the whale, Matt. xii. 40. So must the Son of man be three days and three

nights in the heart of the earth. Yea, the prophet had described the very manner of his funeral, and, long before he was born, foretold in what kind of tomb his body should be laid, Isa. liii. 9. "He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death:" pointing, by that expression, at this tomb of Joseph, who was a rich man; and the scriptures cannot be broken.

Reason 3. *Thirdly*, He must be buried, to complete his humiliation; this being the lowest step he could possibly descend to in his abased state. *They have brought me to the dust of death*: lower he could not be laid; and so low he must lay his blessed head, else he had not been humbled to the lowest.

Reason 4. *Fourthly*, But the great end and reason of his interment was the *conquering of death* in its own dominion and territories; which victory over the grave furnished the saints with that triumphant *επιβιχιου* song of deliverance, 1 Cor. xv. 55. "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy destruction?" Our graves would not be so sweet and comfortable to us, when we come to lie down in them, if Jesus had not lain there before us and for us. Death is a dragon, the grave its den; a place of dread and terror; but Christ goes into its den, there grapples with it, and for ever overcomes it; disarms it of all its terror; and not only makes it to cease to be *inimical*, but to become exceeding *beneficial* to the saints; a bed of rest, and a perfumed bed; they do but go into Christ's bed, where he lay before them. For these ends he must be buried.

Secondly, Next let us enquire what manner of funeral Christ had?

And if we intently observe it, we shall find many remarkable properties in it.

First, We shall find it to be a very obscure and private funeral. Here was no external pomp or gallantry: Christ affected it not in his life, and it was no way suitable to the ends and manner of his death. Humiliation was designed in his death; and state is inconsistent with such an end; besides, he died upon the tree; and persons so dying, do not use to have much ceremony and state at their funerals. Three things shew it to be a very humble and obscure funeral, as to what concerned outward glory, with which the great ones of the earth are usually interred. For,

1. The dead body of the Lord was not brought from his own house, as other men's commonly are, but from the tree. They begged it of his judge. Had they not obtained this favour from Pilate, it must have been buried in Golgotha; it had been tumbled into a pit digged under the cross.

2. As it was first begged, then buried, so it was attended with

a very poor train: a few sorrowful women followed the bier. Other men are accompanied to their graves by their relations and friends: the disciples were all scattered from him; afraid to own him dying, and dead.

3. And these few that were resolved to give him a funeral, are forced, by reason of the straits of time, to do it in great haste. Time was short; they take the next sepulchre they can get, and hurry him away that evening into it; for the preparation for the passover was at hand. This was the obscure funeral which the body of the Lord had. Thus was the Prince of the kings of the earth, who has the keys of death and hell, laid into his grave.

Secondly, Yet though men could bestow little honour upon it, the heavens bestowed several marks of honour upon it: adorned it with divers miracles, which wiped off the reproach of his death from him. These miracles were antecedent to his interment, or concomitants of it.

1. There was that extraordinary and preternatural eclipse of the sun; such an eclipse as was never seen since it first shone in heaven; the sun fainted at the sight of such a rueful spectacle, and clothed the whole heaven in black. The sight of this caused a great philosopher, who was then far from the place where this unparalleled tragedy was acting, to cry out upon the sight of it, “* Either the God of nature now suffers, or the frame of the world is now dissolved.” The same Dionysius, writing to Apollonius, a philosopher, who would not embrace the Christian faith, thus goes about to convince him. “† What thinkest thou, (saith he) of the eclipse when Christ was crucified? were we not both of us at Heliopolis, and standing in the same place? Did we not see the moon in a new manner following the sun: and not in the conjunction, but from the ninth hour until the evening, by a reason unknown in nature, directly opposite to the sun? didst thou not then, being greatly terrified, say unto me, O my Dionysius, what strange communications of the heavenly bodies are these?”

Such a preternatural eclipse is remembered in no other history; for it was not in time of conjunction, but opposition, the moon being then at full. From the sixth to the ninth hour, the sun and moon were together in the midst of heaven; but in the evening she appeared in the east, her own place, opposite to the sun. And then miraculously returning from east to west, did not pass by

* *Aut Deus nature patitur, aut mundi machina dissolvitur.* Dionysius Areopag.

† Τι λέλεις περι της εν σωτηριω σαυρω εκλειψεως; αμφοτεροι γαρ το τε κατα ηλιωπολιν αμα παροντες, και συνεσωτες παραδοξως την σεληνην εμωπιλεσαν εωρακαμεν, & γαρ ην συνόδος καιρος, &c. Theod. Metochit. *Hist Rom.* p. 59.

the sun, and set in the west before it, but kept it company for the space of three hours, and then returned to the east again. And whereas in all other natural eclipses, the shadow always begins on the western parts of the body of the sun, and that part is also first cleared; it was quite contrary in this; for though the moon was opposite to the sun, and distant from it the whole breadth of heaven, yet with a miraculous swiftness it overtook the sun, darkened first the eastern part of it, and soon prevailed over its whole body; which caused darkness over all the land; i. e. say some, over the whole earth; or, as others, over the whole land of Jewry; or, as others, over the whole horizon, and all places of the same altitude and latitude, which is most probable.

Secondly, And as Christ's funeral was adorned with such a miraculous eclipse, which put the heavens and earth into mourning; so *the rocks did rend*: the veil of the temple rent in twain from top to bottom; the graves opened, and the dead bodies of many saints arose and went into the holy city, and were seen of many. The *rending of the rocks* was a sign of God's fierce indignation, Nahum i. 6. and a discovery of the greatness of his power; shewing them what they deserved, and what he could do to them that had committed this horrid fact; though he rather chose at this time to shew the dreadful effects of it upon inanimate rocks, than rocky-hearted sinners; but especially it served to convince the world, that it was none other but the Son of God that died; which was farther manifested by these concomitant miracles.

As for the *rending in twain of the veil*, it was a notable miracle, plainly shewing that all ceremonies were now accomplished and abolished; no more veils now: as also that believers have now most free access into heaven. At that very instant when the veil rent, the high-priest was officiating in the most holy place, and the veil which hid him from the rest of the people, being rent, they might freely see him about his work in the holy of holies; a lively emblem of our High-priest, whom now we see by faith in the heavens, there performing his intercession-work for us.

The *opening of the graves*, plainly shewed the design and end of Christ's going into it; that it might not have dominion over the bodies of the saints, but being vanquished and destroyed by Christ, lets go all that are his whom he ransomed from the grave as a prey out of its paws: a specimen whereof was given in those holy ones that rose at that time and appeared to many in the holy city. Thus was the funeral of our Lord performed by men: Thus was it adorned by miracles from heaven.

Use. And now we have seen Jesus interred; he that wears at his girdle the keys of hell and death, himself locked up in the grave. What shall I say of him whom they now laid in the grave? shall I

undertake to tell you what he was, what he did, suffered, and deserved? Alas! the tongues of angels must pause and stammer in such a work. I may truly say, as Nazianzen said of Bazil, "No tongue but his own can sufficiently commend and praise him." He is a sun of righteousness; a fountain of life; a bundle of love. Of him it might be said in that day, Here lies lovely Jesus, in whom is treasured up whatsoever an angry God can require for his satisfaction, or an empty creature for his perfection; before him was none like him, and after shall none arise comparable to him. "If every leaf and spire of grass," (saith * one,) "nay, all the stars, sands and atoms, were so many souls and seraphims, whose love should double in them every moment to all eternity, yet would it fall infinitely short of what is due to his worth and excellency. Suppose a creature composed of all the choice endowments that ever dwelt in the best of men since the creation of the world, in whom you find a meek Moses, a strong Sampson, a faithful Jonathan, a beautiful Absalom, a rich and wise Solomon; nay, and add to this, the understanding, strength, agility, splendour, and holiness of all the angels, it would all amount but to a dark shadow of this incomparable Jesus."

"Who ever weighed Christ in a pair of balances?" saith another. "Who hath seen the foldings and plaits, the heights and depths of that glory that is in him! O for such a heaven, as but to stand afar off and see, and love, and long for him, while time's thread be cut, and this great work of creation dissolved!—O, if I could yoke in among the throng of angels and seraphims, and now glorified saints, and could raise a new love-song of Christ before all the world! I am pained with wondering at new opened treasures in Christ. If every finger, member, bone and joint, were a torch burning in the hottest fire in hell, I would they could all send out love-praises, high songs of praise for evermore, to that plant of renown, to that royal and high Prince, Jesus my Lord. But, alas! his love swelleth in me, and finds no vent.—I mar his praises, nay, I know no comparison of what Christ is, and what he is worth. All the angels, and all the glorified, praise him not so much as in halves. Who can advance him, or utter all his praise?—O, if I could praise him, I would rest content to die of love for him. O, I would to God I could send in my praises to my incomparable Well-beloved, or cast my love-songs of that matchless Lord Jesus over the walls, that they might light in his lap before men and angels!—But when I have spoken of him till my head rive, I have said just nothing; I may begin again. A God-head, a Godhead, is a world's wonder! Set ten thousand thousand

* Mr. Jenkin.

new-made worlds of angels and elect men, and double them in number ten thousand thousand thousand times: let their hearts and tongues be ten thousand times more agile and large than the hearts and tongues of the seraphims, that stand with six wings before him; when they have said all for the glorifying and praising of the Lord Jesus, they have spoken little or nothing. O that I could even wear out this tongue in extolling his highness! But it is my daily admiration, and I am confounded with his incomparable love."

Thus have his enamoured friends faintly expressed his excellencies; and if they have therein done any thing, they have shewn the impossibility of his due praises.

Come and see, believing souls, look upon dead Jesus in his winding-sheet by faith, and say, Lo, this is he, of whom the church said, "My beloved is white and ruddy:" his ruddiness is now gone, and a death-paleness hath prevailed over all his body, but still as lovely as ever, yea, altogether lovely.

If David, lamenting the death of Saul and Jonathan, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights; who put ornaments of gold upon your apparel;" Much rather may I say, *Children of Zion, weep over Jesus, who clothed you with righteousness, and the garments of salvation.*

This is he who quitted the throne of glory; left the bosom of unspeakable delights; came in a body of flesh, produced in perfect holiness; brake through many and great impediments, (thy great unworthiness, the wrath of God and man,) by the strength of love to bring salvation home to thy soul. Can he that believably considers this, do less than faint at the sense of that love that brought him to the dust of death, and cry out with that father, "My Lord was crucified!" But I will insist no longer upon generals; but draw down the particulars of Christ's funeral to your use, in the following corollaries,

Corollary 1. Was Christ buried in this manner? *Then a decent and mournful funeral, where it can be had, is very laudable among Christians.*

I know the souls of the saints have no concernment for their bodies, nor are they solicitous how the body is treated here; yet there is a respect due to them, as they are the temples wherein God hath been served, and honoured by those holy souls that once dwelt in them; as also upon the account of their relation to Christ, even when they lie by the walls; and the glory that will be one day put upon them, when they shall be changed, and made like unto Christ's glorious body. Upon such special accounts as these, their bodies deserve an honourable treatment, as well as upon the

account of humanity, which owes this honour to the bodies of all men.

To have no funeral, is accounted a judgment, Eccles. vii. 4. or to be tumbled into a pit without any to lament us, is as lamentable. We read of many solemn and mournful funerals in scripture*, wherein the people of God have affectionately paid their respects and honours to the dust of the saints, as men that were deeply sensible of their worth, and how great a loss the world sustains by their remove. Christ's funeral had as much of decency and solemnity in it, as the time would permit; though he was a stranger to all pomp, both in life and death.

Corol. 2. Did Joseph and Nicodemus so boldly appear at a time of so much danger, to beg the body, and give it a funeral? *Let it be for ever a caution to strong Christians, not to despise or glory over the weak.* You see here a couple of poor, low-spirited, and timorous persons, that were afraid to be seen in Christ's company, when the other disciples professed their readiness to die with him: yet those flee, and these appear for him, when the trial comes indeed. If God desert the strong, and assist the weak, the feeble shall be as David, and the strong as tow. I speak not this to discourage any man from striving to improve inherent graces to the utmost; for it is ordinarily found in experience, that the degrees of assisting grace, are given out according to the measures of inherent grace: but I speak it to prevent a sin incident to strong Christians, which is to despise the weak, which God corrects by such instances and examples as this before us.

Corol. 3. *Hence we may be assisted in discerning the depths of Christ's humiliation for us:* And see from what, to what his love brought him. It was not enough, that he who was in the form of God, became a creature, which was an infinite stoop, nay, to be made a Man, an inferior order of creatures; nay, to be a poor man, to spend his days in poverty and contempt, but also to be a dead corpse for our sakes. *O what manner of love is this!*

Now, the deeper the humiliation of the Son of God was, the more satisfactory to us it must needs be; for as it shews us the heinousness of sin, that deserves all this, so the fulness of Christ's satisfaction, whereby he makes up that breach. O, it was deep humiliation indeed! how unlike himself is he now become! doth he look like the Son of God? What! the Son of God, whom all the angels adore, to be hurried by three or four persons into his grave in an evening! to be carried from Golgotha to the grave in this manner, and there lie as a captive to death for a time! Never

* Gen. xxiii. 2. Gen. xxxv. 19. Gen. l. 10. Numb. vx. 29. 2 Chron. xxxv. 24. John xi. 31. Acts viii. 2.

was the like change of conditions; never such an abasement heard of in the world.

Corol. 4. From this funeral of Christ results the purest, and strongest consolation and encouragement to believers, against the fears of death and the grave. If this be so, that Jesus hath lain in the grave before you; let me say then to you, as the Lord spake to Jacob, Gen. xlv. 2, 3. "Fear not to go down into Egypt, for I will go down with thee, and I will also surely bring thee up again." So here, fear not believer, to go down to the grave, for God will be with thee there, and will surely bring thee up thence. This consideration that Jesus Christ hath lain in the grave himself, gives manifold encouragements to the people of God, against the terrors of the grave.

First, The grave *received*, but could not *destroy* Jesus Christ: death swallowed him, as the whale did Jonah his type, but could not digest him when it had swallowed him, but quickly delivered him up again. Now Christ's lying in the grave, as the common head and representative of believers, what comfort should this inspire into their hearts: for, as it fared with Christ's body personal, so it shall with Christ's body mystical: it could not retain him; it shall not for ever retain them. This resurrection of Christ out of his grave, is the very ground of our hope for a resurrection out of our graves. "Christ is risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept," 1 Cor. xv. 20.

Secondly, As the union betwixt the body of Christ, and the Divine nature was not dissolved, when that body was laid in the grave, so the union betwixt Christ and believers is not, cannot be dissolved, when their bodies shall be laid in their graves. It is true, the natural union betwixt his soul and body was dissolved for a time; but the *hypostatical union* was not dissolved, no, not for a moment: that body was the body of the Son of God, when it was in the sepulchre. In like manner, the natural union betwixt our souls and bodies is dissolved by death; but the mystical union betwixt us and Christ, yea, betwixt our very dust and Christ, can never be dissolved.

Thirdly, As Christ's body, when it was in the grave, did there rest in hope, and was assuredly a partaker of that hope; so it shall fare with the dead bodies of the saints, when they lay them down also in the dust: "My flesh also shall rest in hope," saith Christ, Psal. xvi. 9, 10, 11. In like manner the saints commit their bodies to the dust in hope: "The righteous hath hope in his death," Prov. xiv. 32. And as Christ's hope was not a vain hope, so neither shall their hope be vain.

Fourthly, and *lastly,* Christ's lying in the grave before us, hath quite changed, and altered the nature of the grave; so that it is

not what it was: it was once a part of the curse. "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return," was a part of the threatening, and curse for sin. The grave had the nature and use of a prison, to keep the bodies of sinners against the great assizes, and then deliver them up into the hands of a great and terrible God; but now it is no prison, but a bed of rest: yea, and a perfumed bed, where Christ lay before us. Which is a sweet consideration of the grave indeed; "They shall enter into peace, they shall rest in their beds," Isa. lvii. 2. O then let not believers stand in fear of the grave. He that hath one foot in heaven need not fear to put the other into the grave. "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me," Psal. xxiii. 4.

Indeed, the grave is a terrible place to them that are out of Christ; death is the Lord's serjeant to arrest them; the grave is the Lord's prison to secure them. When death draws them into the grave, it draws them thither as a lion doth his prey into the den to devour it. So you read, Psal. xlix. 14. "Death shall feed (or prey) upon them." Death there reigns over them in its full power, Rom. v. 14. And though at last it shall render them again to God, yet it were better for them to lie everlastingly where they were, than to rise to such an end; for they are brought out of their graves, as a condemned prisoner out of the prison, to go to execution. But the case of the saints is not so; the grave (thanks be to our Lord Jesus Christ!) is a privileged place to them, whilst they sleep there; and when they awake, it will be with singing. When they awake, they shall be satisfied with his likeness.

Corollary 5. Lastly, *Since Christ was laid in his grave, and his people reap such privileges by it; as ever you expect rest or comfort in your graves,* see that you get union with Christ now.

It was an ancient custom of the Jews, to put rich treasures into the graves with their friends, as well as to bestow much upon their sepulchres. It is said, Hircanus opened David's sepulchre, and took out of it three thousand talents of gold and silver. And to this sense many interpret that act of the Chaldeans, Jer. viii. 1. "At that time, saith the Lord, they shall bring out the bones of the kings of Judah, and the bones of his princes, &c. And they shall spread them before the sun and moon," &c. This is rather conceived to be an act of covetousness than cruelty: they shall ransack their graves for the treasure that is hid there among their bones. It is possible the case so stands with many of you, that you have no great matter to bestow upon your funerals, nor are they like to be splendid; no stately monuments; no hidden treasure; but if Christ be yours, you carry that with you to your graves, which is better than all the gold and silver in the world. What

would you be the better if your coffin were made of beaten gold, or your grave-stone set thick with glittering diamonds? But if you die in the Lord, i. e. interested in and united to the Lord, you shall carry six grounds of comfort with you to your graves, the least of which is not to be purchased with the wealth of both the Indies.

First, The first ground of comfort which a believer carries with him to the grave, is, that the covenant of God holds firmly with his very dust, all the days of its appointed time in the grave. So much Christ tells us, Matt. xxii. 31, 32. "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob: God is not the God of the dead, but of the living;" *q. d.* Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are naturally dead; but inasmuch as God, long after their deaths, proclaimed himself their God still, therefore they are all alive, *federally* alive to God: they live, *i. e.* their covenant-relation lives still. "Whether we live, or whether we die, (saith the apostle) we are the Lord's," Rom. xiv. 7, 8, 9. Now, what an encouragement is here! I am as much the Lord's in the state of the dead, as I was in the state of the living: death puts an end to all other relations and bonds, but the bond of the covenant rots not in the grave: that dust is still the Lord's.

Secondly, As God's covenant with our very bodies is indissoluble, so God's love to our very dust is inseparable. "I am the God of Abraham." God looks down from heaven into the graves of his saints with delight, and looks on that pile of dust with complacency, which those that once loved it cannot behold without loathing. The apostle is express, Rom. viii. 33. that death separates not the believer from the love of God. As at first it was not our natural comeliness or beauty that drew, or engaged his love to us; so neither will he cease to love us when that beauty is gone, and we become objects of loathing to all flesh. When a husband cannot endure to see a wife, or a wife her husband; but saith of them that were once dear and pleasant, as Abraham of his beloved Sarah, "Bury my dead out of my sight;" yet then the Lord delights in it as much as ever. The goldsmith does not value the dust of his gold, as God values the dust of his saints, for all these precious particles are united to Christ.

Thirdly, As God's love will be with you in the grave, so God's providence shall take order about your graves, when they shall be digged for you. And be sure he will not dig your graves till you are fit to be put into them: he will bring you thither in the best time; Job v. 26. "Thou shalt come to thy grave as a shock of corn in its season:" you shall be ripe and ready before God house you there. It is said of David, that "after he had served

“his generation by the will of God, he fell asleep,” Acts xiii. 36. O what a holy and wise will is that will of God, that so orders our death! And how equal is it, that our will should be concluded by it?

Fourthly, If you be in Christ, as God's covenant holds with you in the grave, his love is inseparable from your dust, his providence shall give order when it shall be digged for you, so, in the next place, his pardons have loosed all the bonds of guilt from you, before you lie down in the grave: so that you shall not die in your sins. Ah, friends, what a comfort is this! that you are the Lord's free-men in the grave! sin is a bad bed-fellow, and a worse grave-fellow. It is a grievous threatening, John viii. 24. “Ye shall die “in your sins.” Better be cast alive into a pit among dragons and serpents, than dead in your graves among your sins. O what a terrible word is that, Job xx. 11. “His bones are full of the sins “of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust!” But from the company of sin, in the grave, all the saints are delivered. God's full, free, and final pardons have shut guilt out of your graves.

Fifthly, Whenever you come to your graves, you shall find the enmity of the grave slain by Christ: it is no enemy; nay, you will find it friendly, a privileged place to you: it will be as sweet to you that are in Christ, as a soft bed in a still quiet chamber to one that is weary and sleepy. Therefore, it is said, 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22. “Death is yours;” yours is a privilege; your friend: there you shall find sweet rest in Jesus; be hurried, pained, troubled no more.

Sixthly, To conclude: if in Christ, know this for your comfort, that your own Lord Jesus Christ keeps the keys of all the chambers of death: and as he unlocks the door of death, when he lets you in, so he will open it again for you when you awake, to let you out; and from the time he opens to let you in, till the time he opens to let you out, he himself wakes and watches by you while you sleep there. “I (saith he) have the keys of death,” Rev. i. 18. O then, as you expect peace or rest in the chambers of death, get union with Christ. A grave with Christ is a comfortable place.