

when he dwelt among us. For indeed he there lives and acts upon our account, Heb. vii. 25. 1 John ii. 1, 2.

And how seasonable and comfortable will the meditations of Christ's exaltation be to thee, O believer, when sickness hath wasted thy body, withered its beauty, and God is bringing thee to the dust of death! Ah! think then, that that "vile body shall be conformed to the glorious body of Christ," Phil. iii. 21. As God hath glorified, and highly exalted his Son, "whose form was marred more than any man's;" so will he exalt thee also. I do not say, to a parity, or equality, in glory with Christ, for, in heaven he will be discerned and distinguished, by his peculiar glory, from all the angels and saints; as the sun is known by its excellent glory from the lesser stars. But we shall be conformed to this glorious Head, according to the proportion of members. O whither will love mount the believer in that day!

Having spoken thus much of Christ's exalted state, to cast some general light upon it, and engage your attentions to it, I shall now, according to the degrees of this his wonderful exaltation, briefly open it, under the fore-mentioned heads, viz. his resurrection, ascension, session at the Father's right-hand, and his return to judge the world.

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## SERMON XXXIX.

Wherein the Resurrection of CHRIST, with its influences upon the Saints Resurrection, is clearly opened, and comfortably applied, being the first Step of his Exaltation.

MATTH. XXVIII. 6.

*He is not here; for he is risen, as he said: come, see the place where the Lord lay.*

**W**E have finished the doctrine of Christ's humiliation, wherein the Sun of righteousness appeared to you, as a setting sun, gone out of sight; but as the sun when it is gone down to us, begins a new day in another part of the world, so Christ, having finished his course, and work in this world, rises again, and that, in order to the acting another glorious part of his work in the world above. In his death, he was upon the matter totally eclipsed; but in his resurrection, he begins to recover his light and glory again. God never intended that the darling of his soul should be lost in an obscure sepulchre. An angel descends from heaven, to roll

away the stone, and, with it, the reproach of his death; and to be the heavenly herald, to proclaim his resurrection to the two Marys, whose love to Christ had, at this time, drawn them to visit the sepulchre, where they lately left him.

At this time (the Lord being newly risen) the keepers were trembling, and become as dead men. So great was the terrible majesty and awful solemnity attending Christ's resurrection; but, to encourage these good souls, the angel prevents them with these good tidings; "He is not here; for he is risen, as he said: come, see the place where the Lord lay:" *q. d.* Be not troubled, though you have not the end you came for, *one sight more of your dear, though dead Jesus*; yet you have not lost your labour; for, to your eternal comfort, I tell you, "he is risen, as he said." And to put it out of doubt, come hither and satisfy yourselves, "See the place where the Lord lay."

In which words we have both a declaration and confirmation of the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

*First*, A declaration of it by the angels, both negatively and affirmatively. Negatively, *He is not here*. Here indeed you laid him, here you left him, and here you thought to find him as you left him; but you are happily mistaken, *He is not here*. However, this giving them no satisfaction, so he might continue dead still, though removed to another place, as indeed they suspected he was, John xx. 13. therefore his resurrection is declared positively and affirmatively; *He is risen*;  $\eta\gamma\epsilon\gamma\theta\eta$ , the \* word imports, the active power or self-quickening principle, by which Christ raised himself from the state of the dead. Which Luke takes notice of also, Acts i. 3. Where he saith, *He shewed*, or presented, *himself alive after his passion*. It was the divine nature, or Godhead of Christ, which revived and raised the manhood.

*Secondly*, Here is also a plain confirmation of Christ's resurrection, and that, *first*, From Christ's own prediction, *He is risen, as he said*. He foretold that which I declare to be now fulfilled. Let it not therefore seem incredible to you. *Secondly*, by their own sight, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay." The grave hath lost its guest; it is now empty; death hath lost its prey. It received, but could not retain him, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay." Thus the resurrection of Christ is declared, and confirmed. Hence our observation is,

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\* The argument whereby we prove that Christ raised himself by his own power, is drawn from the very activity of his resurrection: *Christus ηγεγεθη*, i. e. *Christ arose*, Matt. xxviii. 6.  $\pi\alpha\rho\epsilon\sigma\eta\sigma\epsilon\nu\ \epsilon\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\nu\ \zeta\omega\omicron\tau\alpha$ , Acts i. 3. *Maccov. loc. Com. p. 874.*

Doct. *That our Lord Jesus Christ, by the almighty power of his own Godhead, revived, and rose from the dead; to the terror and consternation of his enemies, and the unspeakable consolation of believers.*

That our Lord Jesus Christ, though laid, was not lost in the grave; but the third day revived and rose again, is a truth confirmed to us by many infallible proofs, as Luke witnesseth, Acts i. 3. We have testimonies of it, both from heaven and earth, and both infallible. From heaven, we have the testimony of angels, and to the testimony of an angel all credit is due; for angels are holy creatures, and cannot deceive us. The angel tells the two Marys, in the text, "He is risen." We have testimonies of it from men, holy men, who were eye-witnesses of this truth, to whom he shewed himself alive by the space of forty days after his resurrection, by no less than \* nine solemn apparitions to them. Sometimes five hundred brethren saw him at once, 1 Cor. xv. 6. These were holy persons, who durst not deceive, and who confirmed their testimony with their blood. So that no point of religion is of more confessed truth, and infallible certainty than this before us.

And blessed be God it is so. For if it were not, then were the "gospel in vain," 1 Cor. xv. 14. seeing it hangs the whole weight of our faith, hope, and salvation, upon Christ as risen from the dead †. If this were not so, then would the holy, and divinely inspired apostles be found *false-witnesses*, 1 Cor. xv. 15. For they all, with one mouth, constantly, and to the death affirmed it. If Christ be not risen, "then are believers yet in their sins," 1 Cor. xv. 17. For our justification is truly ascribed to the resurrection of Christ, Rom. iv. 25. Whilst Christ was dying, and continued in the state of the dead, the price of our redemption was all that while but in paying, the payment was completed, when he revived and rose again. Therefore for Christ to have continued always in the state of the dead, had been never to have completely satisfied; hence the whole force and weight of our justification depends upon his resurrection. Nay, had not Christ risen, "the dead had perished," 1 Cor. xv. 17. Even the dead who died in the faith of Christ, and of whose salvation there now remains no ground to doubt. Moreover,

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\* John xx. 14. Mark xvi. 12. John xx. 19. 1 Cor. xv. 6, 7. 1 Cor. xv. 8. John vii. 26. John xxi. 1, 2. Luke xxiv. 36.

† Our deliverance, was in his death, put in motion; or, as they say, *in fieri*, i. e. begin; but was finished in his resurrection, whence it is, that our justification or absolution from debts is justly by the apostle ascribed not to his death but resurrection, &c. *Maccor. loc. C. m. p. 869.*

Had he not revived and risen from the dead, how could all the *types* that prefigured it have been satisfied? Surely they must have stood as insignificant things in the scriptures; and so must all the predictions of his resurrection, by which it was so plainly foretold. See Matth. xii. 40. Luke xxiv. 46. Psal. xvi. 10. 1 Cor. xv. 4.

To conclude. Had he not risen from the dead, how could he have been installed in that glory whereof he is now possessed in heaven, and which was promised him before the world was, upon the account of his death and sufferings? "For to this end Christ both died, and rose and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living," Rom. xiv. 9. And that, in this state of dominion and glorious advancement, he might powerfully apply the virtues and benefits of his blood to us, which else had been as a precious cordial spilt upon the ground.

So then, there remains no doubt at all of the certainty of Christ's resurrection; it was so, and upon all accounts it must needs be so; for you see how great a weight the scriptures hang upon this nail. And blessed be God it is a nail fastened in a sure place. I need spend no more words to confirm it; but rather choose to explain and open the nature and manner of his resurrection, which I shall do by shewing you four or five properties of it. And the first is this,

*First*, Christ rose from the dead with awful majesty. So you find it in Mat. xxviii. 2, 3, 4. "And behold there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men." Human infirmity was not able to bear such heavenly majesty as attended the business of that morning. Nature sank under it. This earthquake was, as one calls it, *triumphale signum*: a sign of triumph, or token of victory, given by Christ, not only to the keepers, and the neighbouring city, but to the whole world, that he had overcome death in its own dominions, and, like a conqueror, lifted up his head above all his enemies. So when the Lord fought from heaven for his people, and gave them a glorious, though but temporal deliverance; see how the prophetess drives on the triumph in that rhetorical song, Judg. v. 4, 5. Alluding to the most awful appearance of God, at the giving of the law. "Lord, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marchest out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water. The mountains melted from before the Lord, even that Sinai from

“before the Lord God of Israel.” Our Lord Jesus went out of the grave, in like manner, and marched out of that bloody field with a pomp and majesty \* becoming so great a conqueror.

*Secondly*, And to increase the splendor of that day, and drive on the triumph, his resurrection was attended with the resurrection of many of the saints; who had slept in their graves till then, and then were awakened and raised to attend the Lord at his rising. So you read, Mat. xxvii. 52, 53. “And the graves were opened, “and many bodies of the saints, which slept, arose, and came out “of the graves, after his resurrection; and went into the holy “city and appeared unto many.” This wonder was designed, both to adorn the resurrection of Christ, and to give a specimen or pledge of our resurrection; which also is to be in the virtue of his. This indeed was the resurrection of saints and none but saints, the resurrection of many saints, yet it was but a special resurrection, intended only to shew what God will one day do for all his saints. And for the present, to give testimony of Christ’s resurrection from the dead. They were seen, and known of many in the city, who doubtless never thought to have seen them any more in this world. To enquire curiously, as some do, who they were, what discourse they had with those to whom they appeared, and what became of them afterwards, is a vain thing. God hath cast a veil of silence and secrecy upon these things, that we might content ourselves with the written word, and he that “will not “believe Moses and the prophets, neither will he believe though “one rise from the dead,” as these saints did.

*Thirdly*, As Christ rose from the dead with those *satellites* or attendants, who accompanied him at his resurrection; so it was by the power of his own Godhead that he quickened and raised himself; and by the virtue of his resurrection were they raised also, who accompanied him. It was not the *Angel* who rolled back the stone that revived him in the sepulchre, but he resumed his own life; so he tells us, John x. 18. “I lay down my life that I may “take it again.” Hence 1 Pet. iii. 18. He is said to be put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit, i. e. by the power of his Godhead, or divine nature, which is opposed there to flesh, or his human nature. By the eternal Spirit he offered himself up to God, when he died, Heb. ix. 14. i. e. by his own Godhead, not the third person in the Trinity, for then it could not have been ascribed to him as his own act, that he offered up himself. And by the same Spirit he was quickened again.

And, therefore, the apostle well observes, Rom. i. 4. “That

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\* *Est incedere cum pompa et majestate, i. e. It is to march with pomp and majesty.*

“ he was declared to be the Son of God with power, by his resurrection from the dead.” Now if he had been raised by the power of the Father, or Spirit only, and not by his own, how could he be declared by his resurrection to be the Son of God? What more had appeared in him than in others? For others are raised by the power of God, if that were all. So that in this respect also it was a marvellous resurrection. Never any did, or shall rise as Christ rose by a self-quickening principle. For though many dead saints rose at that time also, yet it was by the virtue of Christ’s resurrection that their graves were opened, and their bodies quickened. In which respect he saith, John xi. 25. when he raised dead Lazarus, “ I am the resurrection and the life,” i. e. the principle of life and quickening, by which the dead saints are raised.

*Fourthly,* And therefore it may be truly affirmed, that though some dead saints are raised to life before the resurrection of Christ, yet that Christ is “ the first-born from the dead,” as he is called, Col. i. 18. For though Lazarus and others were raised, yet not by themselves, but by Christ. It was by his virtue and power, not their own. And though they were raised to life, yet they died again. Death recovered them again, but Christ dieth no more. “ Death hath no dominion over him.” He was the first that opened the womb of the earth, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.

*Fifthly,* But lastly, Christ rose as a public or common person. “ As the first fruits of them that slept,” 1 Cor. xv. 20. I desire this may be well understood; for upon this account it is that our resurrection is secured to us by the resurrection of Christ; and not a resurrection only, but a blessed and happy one, for the first-fruits both assured and sanctified the whole crop or harvest.

Now that Christ did rise, as a public person, representing and comprehending all the elect, who were called *the children of the resurrection*, is plain from Eph. ii. 6. where we are said to be risen with, or in him. So that, as we are said to die in Adam, (who also was a common person) as the \* branches die in the death of the root; so we are said to be raised from death in Christ, who is the head, root, and representative, of all his elect seed. And why is he called the *first-born*, and *first begotten from the dead*, but with respect to the whole number of the elect, that are to be born from the dead in their time and order also; and as sure as the whole harvest follows the first fruits, so shall the general resurrection of the saints to life eternal follow this birth of the first-born from the dead.

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\* Mankind putrified in their first parent, as the branches in the root. *Greg.*

It shall surely follow it I say, and that not only as a *consequent* follows an *antecedent*, but as an *effect* follows its proper *cause*. Now there is a three-fold casualty, or influence that Christ's resurrection hath upon the saints resurrection, of which it is at once the *meritorious*, *efficient*, and *exemplary* cause.

*First*, The resurrection of Christ is a *meritorious* cause of the saints resurrection, as it completed his satisfaction, and finished his payment, and so our justification is properly assigned to it, as before was noted from Rom. iv. 25. This his resurrection was the receiving of the acquittance, the cancelling of the bond. And had not this been done, we had still been in our sins, as he speaks, 1 Cor. xv. 7. and so our guilt had been still a bar to our happy resurrection. But now, the price being paid in his death, which payment was finished when he revived; and the discharge then received for us, now there is nothing lies in bar against our resurrection to eternal life.

*Secondly*, As it is the meritorious cause of our resurrection, so it is the *efficient cause* of it also. For when the time shall come that the saints shall rise out of the dust, they shall be raised by Christ, as their head, in whom the *effective principle* of their life is. "Your life is hid with Christ in God," as it is Col. iii. 3. As when a man awakes out of his sleep\*, "the animal spirits seated in the brain, being set at liberty by the digestion of those vapours that bound them up, do play freely through every part and member of the body;" so Christ, the believers mystical head, being quickened, the spirit of life, which is in him, shall be diffused through all his members to quicken them also in the morning of the resurrection. Hence the warm animating dew of Christ's resurrection is said to be to our bodies, as the dew of the morning is to the withered, languishing plants, which revive by it, Isa. xxvi. 19. "Thy dew is as the dew of herbs;" and then it follows, "the earth shall cast forth her dead." So that by the same faith we put Christ's resurrection into the *promises*, we may put the believer's resurrection into the *conclusion*. And therefore, the apostle makes them convertibles, reasoning forward, from Christ's to ours; and back again from ours to his, 1 Cor. xv. 12, 13. Which is also the sense of that scripture, Rom. viii. 10, 11. "And if Christ be in you, the body indeed is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness." i. e. Though you are really united to Christ by the Spirit, yet your bodies must die as well as other

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\* *Proximum instrumentum sive sedes somni est cerebrum, utpote in quo spiritus animales frigeant et condensantur, aut etiam resolvuntur et dissipantur, proxime, tanquam in propria spirituum animalium officina, et in quo etiam radices nervorum obstruuntur per vapores, ne spiritus animales sensui communi servire aut in partes reliquas inferiores corporis propagari libere possint.* Keckerm. Syst. Phys. p. (mih) 441.

men's; but your souls shall be presently, upon your dissolution, swallowed up in life. And then it follows, verse 11. "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you; he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you," i. e. though your bodies must die, yet they shall live again in the resurrection; and that by virtue of the Spirit of Christ which dwelleth in you, and is the bond of your mystical union with him your head. You shall not be raised as others are, by a mere word of power, but by the Spirit of life dwelling in Christ your head, which is a choice prerogative indeed.

*Thirdly*, Christ's resurrection is not only the meritorious and efficient cause, but it is also the *exemplary* cause or pattern of our resurrection. "\* He being the first and best, is therefore the pattern and measure of all the rest." So you read, Phil. iii. 21. "Who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." Now the *conformity* of our resurrection to Christ's stands in the following particulars. Christ's body was raised substantially the same; so will ours. His body was raised first; so will ours be raised before the rest of the dead. His body was wonderfully improved by the resurrection; so will ours. His body was raised to be glorified; and so will ours.

*First*, Christ's body was raised substantially the same that it was before; and so will ours. Not another, but the same body. Upon this very reason the apostle uses that identical expression, 1 Cor. xv. 53. "This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal, immortality." Pointing, as it were, to his own body when he spake it; the same body, I say, and that not only *specifically* the same, (for indeed no other species of flesh is so privileged) but the same *numerically*, that very body, not a new or another body in its stead. So that it shall be both the *what* it was, and the *who* it was. And indeed to deny this is to deny the resurrection itself. For should God prepare another body to be raised instead of this, it would not be a resurrection, but a creation; for *non resurrectio dici poterit, ubi non resurgit quod cecidit*. That cannot be called a resurrection, where one thing falls and another rises, as Gregory long since pertinently observed.

*Secondly*, His body was raised, not by a word of power from the Father, but by his own Spirit. So will ours. Indeed the power of God shall go forth to unburrough sinners, and fetch them forcibly out of their graves; but the resurrection of the saints is to be effected another way; as I opened but now to you. Even by his Spirit which now dwelleth in them. That very Spirit of Christ

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\* *Optimum in unoquoque genere est regula et mensura ceterorum.*



which effected their spiritual resurrection from sin, shall effect their corporal resurrection also from the grave.

*Thirdly*, His body was raised first, he had in this, as well as in other things, the pre-eminence; so shall the saints, in respect of the wicked, have the pre-eminence in the resurrection, 1 Thes. iv. 16. "The dead in Christ shall rise first." They are to attend the Lord at his coming, and will be brought forth sooner than the rest of the world, to attend on that service. As the *sheriff*, with his men, goes forth to meet the judge, before the gaoler brings forth his prisoners.

*Fourthly*, Christ's body was marvellously improved by the resurrection, and so will ours. It fell in weakness, but was raised in power; no more capable of sorrows, pains and dishonours. In like manner our bodies are "sown in weakness, but raised in strength, sown in dishonour, raised in glory. Sown natural bodies, raised spiritual bodies," as the apostle speaks, 1 Cor. xv. 43, 44. Spiritual bodies, not *properly*, but *analogically*. No distempers hang about glorified bodies, nor are they henceforth subject to any of those natural necessities, to which they are now tied. There are no flaw, defects, or deformities, in the children of the resurrection. What members are now defective or deformed, will then be restored to their perfect being and beauty; "for, "if the universal death of all parts be rescinded by the resurrection, how much more the partial death of any single member?" As Tertullian \* speaks, and from thenceforth they are free from the law of mortality, "They can die no more," Luke xx. 35, 36. Thus shall they be improved by their resurrection.

*Fifthly*, To conclude, Christ's body was raised from the dead to be glorified and crowned with honour. Oh it was a joyful day to him; and so will the resurrection of the saints be to them, the day of the gladness of their hearts. It will be said to them in that morning, "Awake, and sing, ye that dwell in the dust," as Isa. xxvi. 19. O how comfortable will be the meeting betwixt the glorified soul, and its new raised body. Much more comfortable than that of Jacob's and Joseph's, after twenty years absence, Gen. xli. 29. Or that of David's with Jonathan, when he came out of the cave to him, 1 Sam. xx. 41. Or that of the father of the prodigal with his son, who "was dead, and is alive, was lost, "and is found." As he speaks, Luke xv. And there are three things will make it so.

*First*, The gratifications of the soul, by the satisfaction of its natural appetite of union with its own body. For even glorified

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\* *Membri detruncatio vel obtusio nonne mors membri est? Si universalis mors resurrectione rescinditur, quanto magis portionalis!* Tertull. de Resur.

souls in heaven have such an appetite and desire of re-union. Indeed, the angels, who are pure spirits, as they never had union with, so they have no inclination to matter; but souls are otherwise tempered and disposed. We are all sensible of its affection to the body now, in its compounded state, we feel the tender care it hath for the body, the sympathy with it, and lothness to be separated from it. It is said, 1 Cor. v. 6. "To be at home in the "body." And had not God implanted such an inclination to this its tabernacle in it, it would not have paid that due respect it owes the body while it inhabited in it, nor have regarded what became of it when it left it. This inclination remains still with it in heaven, it reckons not itself completely happy till its old dear companion and partner be with it, and in that sense some understand those words, Job xiv. 14. "All the days of my appointed time," i. e. of the time appointed for my body to remain in the grave, *will I wait till my change* (viz. that which will be made by the resurrection) *come*; for it is manifest enough he speaks there of the resurrection. Now, when this its inclination to its own body, its longings and hankerings after it, are gratified with a sight and enjoyment of it again, oh what a comfortable meeting will this make it! especially if we consider,

*Secondly*, The excellent temper and state in which they shall meet each other. For, as the body shall be raised with all the improvements and endowments imaginable, which may render it amiable, and every way desirable, so the soul comes down immediately from God out of heaven, shining in its holiness and glory. It comes perfumed out of those ivory palaces, with a strong scent of heaven upon it. And thus it re-enters its body, and animates it again. But,

*Thirdly*, And principally, that wherein the chief joy of this meeting consists, is the end for which the glorified soul comes down to quicken and repossess it, namely, *to meet the Lord*, and *ever to be with the Lord*. To receive a full reward for all the labours and services it performed to God in this world. This must needs make that day, a day of triumph and exaltation. It comes out of the grave, as Joseph out of his prison, to be advanced to the highest honour. O do but imagine what an extasy of joy, and ravishing pleasure it will be, for a soul thus to resume its own body, and say as it were, unto it, come away, my dear, my ancient friend, who servedst and sufferedst with me in the world; come along with me to meet the Lord, in whose presence I have been ever since I parted with thee. Now thy bountiful Lord hath remembered thee also, and the day of thy glorification is come. Surely it will be a joyful awaking. For, do but imagine, what a joy it is for dear friends to meet after long separation, how do they

use to give demonstrations of their love and delight in each other, by embraces, kisses, tears, &c. Or frame but to yourselves a notion of perfect health, when a sprightly vivacity runs through every part, and the spirits do, as it were, dance before us, when we go about any business; especially to such a business as the business of that day will be, to receive a crown, and a kingdom. Do but imagine then what a sun-shine morning this will be, and how the pains and agonies, cold sweats, and bitter groans at parting will be recompensed by the joy of such a meeting?

And thus I have shewed you the certainty of Christ's resurrection, the nature and properties of it, the threefold influence it hath on the saints resurrection, and the conformity of ours unto his, in these five respects. His body rose substantially the same, so shall ours; his body was raised by the Spirit, so shall ours. Not by the Godhead of Christ as his was, but by the Spirit, who is the bond of our union with Christ. He was raised as the first-begotten from the dead, so the dead in Christ shall rise first. His body was improved by the resurrection, so shall ours. From the consideration of all which,

*Inference 1. We infer, that if Christ was thus raised from the dead, then death is fairly overcome, and swallowed up in victory\*:* were it not so, it had never let Christ escape out of the grave. The prey of the terrible had never been thus rescued out of its paws. *Death* is a dreadful enemy, it defies all the sons and daughters of Adam. None durst cope with this king of terrors but Christ, and he, by dying, went into the very den of this dragon, fought with it, and foiled it in the grave, its own territories and dominions, and came off a conqueror. For, as the apostle speaks, Acts ii. 24. "It was impossible it should hold or detain him." Never did death meet with its over-match before it met with Christ, and he conquering it for us, and in our names, rising as our representative, now every single saint triumphs over it as a vanquished enemy, 1 Cor. xv. 55. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Thus, like Joshua, they set the foot of faith upon the neck of that king, and, with an holy scorn, deride its power. "O death, where is thy sting?" If it be objected that it is said, 1 Cor. xv. 26. "The last enemy that is to

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\* How far short do we come of the primitive Christians, whose faith in the resurrection, and contempt of death, Cyprian thus expresses: With a sound mind, firm faith, and undaunted courage, we are ready to submit to the whole will of God, all fear of death being excluded; we think on the immortality which follows; and when the set time of God's sending for us approaches, we come to him at his call willingly and without delay. *Cypr. sēct 5. de Laps.* But when we come to die, we pass into immortality by death; this is not a coming to our end, but a translating of us. *Cypr. ubi supra.*

“be destroyed is death.” And if so, then it should seem the victory is not yet achieved, and so we do but boast before the victory; it is at hand to reply, that the victory over death, obtained by Christ’s resurrection, is twofold, either *personal* and *incomplete*, or *general* and *complete*. He actually overcame it at his resurrection, in his own person, perfectly and virtually for us, as our head; but at the general resurrection of the saints (which his resurrection, as the first-fruits, assures them of) then it will be utterly vanquished and destroyed. Till then, it will exercise some little power over the bodies of the saints, in which respect it is called the *last enemy*. For sin, the chief enemy that let it in, that was conquered utterly and eradicated when they died; but death holds their bodies in the grave till the coming of Christ, and then it is utterly to be vanquished. For after that they can die no more, I Cor. xv. 54. “And then shall be brought to pass that saying “that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory\*.” *Then*, and not till then, will that conquest be fully completed in our persons, though it be already so in Christ’s; now incompletely in ours, and then completely and fully for ever. For the same word which signifies *victory* doth also signify *perpetuity*, and in this place a final or perpetual conquest. And, indeed, now it smites only with its dart, not with its sting, and that but the believer’s body only, and the body but for a time remains under it neither. So that there is no reason why a believer should stand in a slavish fear of it.

*Inf. 2.* Has Christ, and hath his resurrection such a potent and comfortable influence into the resurrection of the saints? *Then it is the duty, and will be the wisdom of the people of God, so to govern, dispose, and employ their bodies, as become men and women, that understand what glory is prepared for them at the resurrection of the just.* Particularly,

*First,* Be not fondly tender of them, but employ and use them for God here. How many good duties are lost and spoiled by sinful indulgence to our bodies? Alas! we are generally more solicitous to live long, than to live usefully. How many saints have active, vigorous bodies, yet God hath little service from them. If your bodies were animated by some other souls that love God more than you do, and burn with holy zeal to his service, more work would be done for God by your bodies in a day, than is now done in a month. To have an able, healthy body, and not use it for God, for fear of hurting it, is as if one should give you a strong and stately horse, upon condition you must not work or ride him.

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\* *Absorpta est mors eis, vivos in perpetuam, ex Hebræo מִתְּיָוָהּ quod et victoriam significat, et perpetuitatem.* Glass. Rhet. sac. p. 408.

Wherein is the mercy of having a body, except it be employed for God? Will not its reward at the resurrection be sufficient for all the pains you now put it to in his service?

*Secondly*, See that you preserve the due honour of your bodies. "Possess them in sanctification and honour," 1 Thess. iv. 4. O, let not these eyes be now defiled with sin, by which you shall see God. Those ears be inlets to vanity, which shall hear the *Allelujahs* of the blessed. God hath designed honour for your bodies, O, make them not either the instruments or objects of sin. There are sins against the body, 1 Cor. vi. 18. Preserve your bodies from those defilements, for they are the temple of God; "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy," 1 Cor. iii. 17.

*Thirdly*, Let not the contentment and accommodation of your bodies draw your soul into snares, and bring them under the power of temptations to sin. This is a very common case. O how many thousands of precious souls perish eternally for the satisfaction of a vile body for a moment? Their souls must, because their bodies cannot suffer. It is recorded to the immortal honour of these worthies, in Heb. xi. 35. "That they accepted not deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection\*." They might have had a temporal resurrection from death to life, from reproach to honour, from poverty to riches, from pains to pleasure; but upon such terms they judged it not worth acceptance. They would not expose their souls to secure their bodies. They had the same natural affections that other men have. They were made of as tender flesh as we are, but such was the care they had of their souls, and the hope of a better resurrection, that they listened not to the complaints and whinings of their bodies. O, that we were all in the same resolutions with them.

*Fourthly*, *With-hold not, upon the pretence of the wants your own bodies may be in, that which God and conscience bid you to communicate for the refreshment of the saints, whose present necessities require your assistance.* O, be not too indulgent to your own flesh, and cruel to others. Certainly, the consideration of that reward which shall be given you at the resurrection, for every act of Christian charity, is the greatest spur and incentive in the world to it. And to that end it is urged as a motive to charity, Luke xiv. 13, 14. "When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." It was the opinion of an eminent modern divine †, that

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\* No man can rejoice both in this life and that which is to come, but he must necessarily let go the one, who would enjoy the other. *Aug.*

† Mr. Marshal.

no man living, fully understands and believes that scripture, Mat. xxv. 40. "In as much as you have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me." How few saints would be exposed to daily wants and necessities, if that scripture were but fully understood and believed!

*Inf. 3.* Is Christ risen from the dead, and that as a public person and representative of believers? *How are we all concerned then to secure to ourselves an interest in Christ, and consequently in this blessed resurrection?* What consolation would be left in this world, if the hope of the resurrection were taken away? It is this blessed hope that must support you under all the *troubles* of life, and in the *agonies* of death. The securing of a blessed resurrection to yourselves, is therefore the most deep concernment you have in this world. And it may be secured to yourselves, if, upon serious heart-examination, you can discover the following evidences.

Evidence 1. *First, If you are regenerated creatures*, brought forth in a new nature to God, for we are "begotten again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Christ's resurrection is the ground-work of our hope. And the new birth is our title or evidence of our interest in it. So that until our souls are partakers of the spiritual resurrection from the death of sin, we can have no assurance our bodies shall be partakers of that blessed resurrection to life.

"Blessed and holy (saith the Spirit), is he that hath part in the first resurrection, on such the second death hath no power," Rev. xx. 6. Never let unregenerate souls expect a comfortable meeting with their bodies again. Rise they shall by God's terrible citation, at the sound of the last trump, but not to the same end that the saints arise, nor by the same principle. They to whom the spirit is now a principle of *sanctification*, to them he will be the principle of a joyful *resurrection*. See then that you get gracious souls now, or never expect glorious bodies then.

*Evidence 2.* "If you be dead with Christ, you shall live again by the life of Christ. If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection," Rom. vi. 5. *συμφύτοι, planted together.* Some refer it to believers themselves; Jews and Gentiles are planted together in Christ. So \* Erasmus, "Believers grow together like branches upon the same root," which should powerfully enforce the great gospel-duty of unity among themselves. But I would rather understand it, with reference to Christ and believers, with whom believers are in other scriptures said to suffer together, and be glorified together; to die together, and live together; to be crucified

\* *In unum concrecere vel coalescere.*

together, and buried together; all noting the communion they have with Christ, both in his death, and in his life. Now, if the power of Christ's death, i. e. the mortifying influence of it, have been upon our hearts, killing their lusts, deadening their affections, and flattening their appetites to the creature, then the power of his life, or resurrection, shall come (like the animating dew) upon our dead withered bodies, to revive and raise them up to live with him in glory.

*Evidence 3. If your hearts and affections be now with Christ in heaven, your bodies in due time shall be there also, and conformed to his glorious body.* So you find it, Phil. iii. 20, 21. "For our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his own glorious body." "The body is here called vile, or the body of our vileness\*." Not as God made it, but as sin hath marred it. Not *absolutely*, and in itself, but *relatively*, and in comparison of what it will be in its second edition, at the resurrection. Then those scattered bones and dispersed dust, like pieces of old broken battered silver, will be new cast, and wrought in the best and newest fashion, even like to Christ's glorious body. Whereof we have this evidence, that our conversation is already heavenly. The temper, frame, and disposition of our souls is already so; therefore the frame and temper of our bodies in due time shall be so.

*Evidence 4. If you strive now by any means to attain the resurrection of the dead, no doubt but you shall then attain what you now strive for.* This was Paul's great ambition, "that by any means he might attain the resurrection of the dead," Phil. iii. 11. He means not simply a resurrection from the dead, for that all men shall attain, whether they strive for it or no. But by a *metonymy* of the *subject* for the *adjunct*, he intends that complete holiness and perfection, which shall attend the state of the resurrection, so it is expounded, ver. 12. So then, if God have raised in your hearts a vehement desire, and assiduous endeavour after a perfect freedom from sin, and full conformity to God, in the beauties of holiness; that very love of holiness, your present pantings, and tendencies after perfection, speak you to be the persons designed for it.

*Evidence 5. If you are such as do good in your generation.* If you be fruitful and useful men and women in the world, you shall have part in this blessed resurrection, John v. 28, 29. "All that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life." Now it is not

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\* ΤΟ ΣΩΜΑ ΤΗΣ ΤΑΠΕΙΝΩΣΕΩΣ ΗΜΩΝ.

every act *materially* good, that entitles a man to this privilege; but the same requisites that the \* schoolmen assign to make a good prayer, are also necessary to every good work. The person, matter, manner, and end, must be good. Nor is it any single good act, but a *series* and *course* of holy actions, that is here meant. What a spur should this be to us all, as (indeed the apostle makes it, closing up the doctrine of the resurrection, with this solemn exhortation, 1 Cor. xv. 58. with which I also close mine) “*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*”

*Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift.*

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## SERMON XL.

The ASCENSION of CHRIST illustrated, and variously improved, being the second Step of his EXALTATION.

JOHN XX. 17.

*Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not: for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.*

**I**N all the former sermons, we have been following Christ through his humiliation, from the time that he left the blessed bosom of the Father: and now having finished the whole course of his obedience on earth, and risen again from the dead; we must, in this discourse, follow him back again into heaven, and lodge him in that bosom of ineffable delight and love, which for our sakes, he so freely left. For it was not his end in rising from the dead, to live such a low animal life as this is, but to live a most glorious life, as an enthroned King in heaven: upon which state he was now ready to enter, as he tells Mary in the text, and bids her tell it to the disciples, “*Go, tell my brethren, that I ascend to my Father,*” &c.

In the former verses you find Mary waiting at Christ’s sepulchre, in a very pensive frame: exceedingly troubled, because she knew not what was become of Christ, ver. 15. In the next verse, Christ calls her by her name, *Mary*; she knowing the voice, turned her-

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\* *Si bonus bona facit bene ad bonum*; i. e. If one is good, he does what is good in a good manner, and for a good end.