

S E R M O N CXLII.

QUESTION XXXVIII.

WHAT Benefits do Believers receive from Christ at the Resurrection?

A N S W E R.

AT the Resurrection Believers being raised up in Glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted at the Day of Judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full Enjoyment of God to all Eternity.

THE farther we follow the Child of God in tracing of his Happiness, the more surprizing it appears to be. We have traced through its Inchoations in this Life, and the great Advance that it made towards its Perfection at his Death, but the greatest Glory of it still remains: *As Sanctification so Glorification is progressive*; it is not perfected at once, but by steps and degrees: yet there is Perfection which it shall in due season arrive at, whether we are now to follow it. The thing then, which now lies before us for our Contemplation, is the consummate Glory which Christ will at last bring his Redeemed unto, and put them into possession of; the Meditation whereof must needs be sweet to all such, as have here forsaken all for Christ, and have not confined their Hope in Christ to this Life and Time, but expect and wait for it in another Life, and through Eternity. The Time when this Affair shall be transacted, and their Glory consummated, we are told, is at the Resurrection. But here also there is a gradation or several steps to be taken in the completing of it: And our Catechism sums

them up in Three remarkable passages, 1. *The Quality in which they shall rise; they shall be raised up in Glory.* 2. *The Entertainment that shall be given them in the Great and Last Judgment, they shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted at the Day of Judgment.* 3. *The manner how they shall spend their Eternity; they shall be perfectly blessed in the full Enjoyment of God to all Eternity.* We may take a distinct account of these things.

1. *THE Quality in which they shall rise; they shall be raised up in Glory.* There are Two Things here proper to be taken under Consideration, viz. *That there shall be a Resurrection?* 2. *That in that Resurrection, Believers shall be raised in Glory.*

1. *THAT there shall be a Resurrection.* And here it is proper to handle the general Doctrine of it, though our Catechism only mentions it with respect to Believers. The Article of the Resurrection is purely of Revelation, and the whole Confirmation of it must be fetch'd from Divine Testimony. The light of Nature is not only dim, but quite dark as to any discovery made by it of this great and precious Truth. Hence there is so deep a silence about it among the Great and Celebrated Philosophers of the Pagan World. For, tho' we have some of them disputing strongly and rationally for the Immortality of the Soul, and a future state of Rewards or Punishments, which it is to be the Subject of, yet as to the restoring of the Body, and the Souls return to it again, they rather ridicule it than assert it: And if there be any rare and obscure hints of it to be found in any of them, we may suppose, they had it not from the light of Nature, but from their Converse with the People of God. There are two Topicks, to which

which the Consideration of this Doctrine may be referred, viz. *the Possibility & the Futurity of it*: And there is a great difference between these two. *As to the Possibility of it*, it must be argued, either *from the Nature of the Thing, or from the Unlimited Power of Him who is the God of Nature*. This latter, the natural man hath little acquaintance with or belief of, and therefore is wont to confine his Credit of things to the former, and to believe no more about it than he can discover to flow from the Nature of the Thing. Now carnal reason pleads it impossible, from the Nature both of the dissolved Body, and separate Soul. Man's blinded reason is non-pluck here, and thinks the Faith of it Infatuation. The Philosopher looks upon the Soul to be incarcerated in the Body, and wofully manacled by it, and that in Death it receives a Jail-Delivery, and therefore to have no more Inclination to return to it, than an enlarged Prisoner hath to go back to his Dungeon; and that the dissolved Body passeth through so many Changes, that it can never become the same any more. Hence when *Paul* preached the Doctrine of the Resurrection at *Athens*, they turned it into a sport, *Act. 17. 32. And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter.* And tho' some have argued the possibility & facility of this from the equivocal Generation of Insects, the reviving and flourishing of Plants in the Spring; and some curious Experiments in Alchemy; yet all these are rather Illustrations than Demonstrations. And it is certain these are accommodated to Nature; whereas this Resurrection is supernatural, and requires no less than a Creating Power. And hence *Job* argues contrary from the same head, *Job 14. 7, 10, 12. For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. But man dieth; and wasteth away: yea man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? Man lieth down, and riseth not till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.* As to the *Futurity of it*; that is a farther step, and doth not necessarily follow from the former. It is no demonstration that a thing shall be, because it may be. God doth not work in his Efficiency to the utmost of his Divine Power, but hath bounded his Works by his Will; and there is the residue of the Spirit with him. For, tho' an Argument from the Divine Power be of use to confirm our Faith of any revealed Truth, and therefore the Apostle argueth thus about the Resurrection, *Phil. 3. 21. Who 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.* And tho' there are moral Reasons that may be given for a Resurrection; yet the force of them depends upon the good Pleasure of God, and therefore do not of themselves enforce a necessity, tho' they infer a great probability of it. But the Word of God,

which is the rule of our Faith, giveth us a firm assurance of it, in as much as it directly declares it, and gives us instances of it, which are the first fruits & earnest of it. Of these we had a sufficient Account under the last Discourse. But for a more distinct opening of the Nature of this Article, I shall offer a few Particulars to Consideration.

1. *THAT the Resurrection is properly a restoring and reviving of the dead Body, and retaining of it to its own Soul.* We have a prophetic Type of it express in *Ezek. 37. begin.* The Resurrection most peculiarly belongs to the Body, and so it is recorded in our Creed. It is that which fell, that is raised again; it is that which was dissolved, which is restored, and that is the Body. Hence that in *Isai. 26. 19. Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise: awake & sing ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out her dead.* Death had dissipated all the parts of it, reduced them to their Elements, brought them into Dust, and taken from it all sense and life and motion; it is gathered together again in the Resurrection, and Life put into it. And this is done by the return of the Soul again; and it is the same Soul which returns and takes up its abode in that individual Body from which it was separated; as hath formerly been made evident. And in this respect in a more large sense, *Resurrection is attributed to the whole Man*, because, as Death made the Separation, so the Resurrection procures the re-union of them, one to another. Hence that *Prayer*, *1 Kin. 17. 21. And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee let this child's soul come into him again.*

2. *THAT this Resurrection is produced by the Almighty Power of God.* This is the proper Head to which it must be referred. To argue it from the Nature of the Subject is vain; for there is no natural return from such a privation to the Habit again. All that can be said on that account, is, that it is a Subject capable for Omnipotency to work upon; but that nothing else can do it to effect is very certain: He who denies that God can do it, may as well deny the Creation. What can be too hard for him, who could call something out of nothing? The Resurrection of Christ is therefore assigned to this power of God, *Eph. 1. 19, 20. And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power: Which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.* And because the Power exerted herein is supernatural, there are no Instruments that are used to be instrumental in-to or causal of it, but it is an immediate work of Divine Power. The Voice of the Arch-Angel, and Sound of the last Trump, may be preparatory to it, and signal of it, but the Efficacious Will and Word of God, shall bring it to pass. Hence that, *Joh. 5. 28, 29. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in*
the

the which all that are in the graves shall bear his voice, And shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

3. THAT there shall be a Resurrection both of the Just, & the Unjust. We have this distribution asserted in the forecited Text, Job. 5. 29. This also was a piece of Paul's Creed, Act. 24. 15. And have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. Not only shall the Redeemed of Christ, and those that have believed in him, have a Resurrection, as if all others should remain unraised; which is the Opinion of some; but in direct contradiction to the Word of God: But Wicked Men must rise too. So that the meer belief of a Resurrection doth not afford matter of Consolation to sinful men against the tears of Death, in as much as this is not a singular Privilege of some, but a common Lot of both Good and Bad; and must therefore carry as much Terror in it to the one, as Comfort to the other.

4. THAT all the Individuals that ever Died, shall Rise again. Here we have both the extension and the limitation of the Subject. If the Inquiry be, Who shall Rise again? It may be answered, Negatively, Not such as never Died, and consequently, not such as never Lived. There have been some, who did not taste Death, as *Enoch* and *Elias*, these will not rise again, being Glorified already in Soul and Body; tho' it is to be thought that they will come to the Judgment with Christ. There were some who were raised at Christ's Resurrection, *Mar. 12. 7, 52*. And these were to be a sort of the first fruits of the power of his Resurrection. And it is not to be thought that these died again, but that they went with him to his Kingdom, and so their Resurrection is already past. There will be some found alive in the World, when Christ cometh to Judgment. Of these, *1 Thes. 4. 17*. Then we which are alive, & remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we be ever with the Lord. Now these shall not dye, but be changed, *1 Cor. 15. 51, 52*. What this Change shall be is disputed, and I may speak something of it hereafter; only it will not be Death, and so they will need no Resurrection. But then it must be said Affirmatively, all that ever Dyed, and are then found Dead without Exception. It will be of as large extent as Death was: Those very Abortions which dyed in the Womb, and never saw the Light, if yet there Bodies were formed, and their reasonable Souls infused, shall stand up again; for these had an intire Humanity, and these Souls were Immortal. And that all of all Sexes, Ages, Degrees, shall thus rise, we are assured, because they shall all appear in the Judgment, to which this is an Introduction. See, *Rev. 20. 12, 13*. And I saw the dead small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life:

and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it: and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to his works.

5. THE Time of this general Resurrection shall be at the End of the World, and immediately before, and preparatory to the Day of General Judgment. There were some raised in the days of Christ's being upon Earth, and the times of the Apostles, who died again; there remains a second Resurrection for these. I list not here to dispute about the first Resurrection, mentioned, *Rev. 20. 5*. but shall leave those who apply it to a bodily Resurrection, antecedaneous to the Thousand happy Years expected, to abound in their own sense, craving liberty to dissent from them, as in a Point extra-fundamental: But that the Resurrection and the last Judgment shall be together, and the one shall make way for and introduce the other, I firmly believe according to Scripture. Christ therefore tells us, that they shall rise to the Judgment, *Job. 5. 29*. And they are declared to commence at once, *Rev. 20. 12, 13*. How near the approach of this is, it is not for Men to determine, it belongs to the times and seasons which it is not for us to know, the Father having put them in his own Power, *Act. 1. 7*. Only this I believe, that there is a Glorious State of the Church Militant to intervene between this and that.

6. THE great End or Design of the Resurrection is, that God may be Everlastingly Glorified in Man, in his whole specifical Nature. A Soul and a Body are both essential to Humanity, nor can a Being be truly called Man, that doth not consist of both. Now Man being placed under God's special Government, was to be led by it to an Everlasting State; for which end he was placed under a Law requiring the Obedience of his whole Man, and engaging either Rewards or Punishments to the whole according to his deporting himself; for which there is a Day of Judgment appointed: And that he may be there tried, and accordingly disposed of, he must rise again. And in this respect we may say, that Justice it self requires it not Absolutely, but Relatively, according as the Rules of God's Governing the reasonable Creature are fixed in the Covenant Transactions between him and them. And in this sense the Apostle refers us to the Righteousness of God, *2 Thes. 1. 7, 8*.

7. THOUGH all rise, yet there is a vast difference between the Resurrection of the Godly and of the Wicked. This appears in a double respect, viz. both the Grounds & Causes of their Rising, and the Quality in which they shall Rise. The latter of these will be distinctly considered afterwards. Touching the former let us observe,

1. THERE is indeed the Power of God, equally appearing in the one, as in the other. Their Death, under a Physical Consideration, puts their Bodies into alike Condition, and there-
fore

fore there must the same Omnipotency be exerted in the raising of a Godly, and a Wicked Man. It is equally a Divine Work, and therefore univerſally appropriated to God. 2 Cor. 1. 9. *But we had the ſentence of death in our ſelves, that we ſhould not truſt in our ſelves, but in God who raiſed the dead.*

2. **CHRIST** is to be equally the Judge of both. The Reſurrection is a preparatory to the Judgment, which Chriſt is to be the Diſpenſer of, and all are to appear before Him, and receive their Sentence from Him. 2 Cor. 5. 10. *For we muſt all appear before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* He is therefore ſaid to be Conſtituted the Judge of both quick and dead, Act. 10. 42. which comprehends both the Godly and the Wicked.

3. **BOTH** riſe, ſo as not to die a natural Death any more. When their Souls & Bodies are thus re-united, they ſhall never be ſeparated any more. In this reſpect they ſhall alike partake in Immortality. There is an unchangeable Everlaſtingneſs that will attend upon the Change that will be made on them by the Reſurrection. And hence there are Eternal Receptacles provided for their perpetual Abode, Mar. 25. ult. *And theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment: but the righteous into life eternal.*

4. **THESE** are yet divers reſpects in which there is a manifeſt oppoſition in the Grounds or Reaſons of the Reſurrection of theſe and theſe. Particularly,

(1.) **THE** Godly riſe to perfect their Happineſs, but the Wicked to complet their Miſery. This appears, in that the great deſign of their Riſing is to be judged, in which Judgment they are to be diſpoſed of according to what they have been in this Life, and therefore they are to receive the Sentence accordingly, Mar. 25. 34, 41. *Then ſhall the king ſay unto them on his right hand, Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Then ſhall he ſay alſo to them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. Accordingly we have that diſtribution, Dan. 12. 2. *And many of them that ſleep in the duſt of the earth ſhall awake, ſome to everlaſting life, and ſome to ſhame and everlaſting contempt.**

(2.) **THE** Godly riſe in purſuance of God's Promise, but the Wicked according to his Threatning. There is indeed, God's Faithfulneſs to his Word in both, but one is from a Word of Promise, the other a fearful Threatning. God hath engaged Eternal Life to his Children, and they riſe to go to poſſeſs it: and he hath threatned Eternal Deſtruction to his Enemies, and this diſpoſeth them for it. The Godly riſe to enjoy endless Glory with Chriſt in Heaven; the Wicked riſe to ſuffer enduring Torments with the Devils in Hell.

(3.) **THE** Reſurrection of the one flows from God's Love; whereas the other's is from his juſt

Severity. As the Reſurrection is to the Wicked a Penalty, ſo it is to the Godly a Benefit. Now all the Benefits which he beſtows upon his own, derive from the Fountain of his Everlaſting Love; and therefore he will thus make theſe the Everlaſting Monuments of it: Whereas, becauſe he will ſhew his Wrath and make his Power known in the other, he will thus fit them for it.

(4.) **THE** Juſt riſe to ſtand for ever, but the Unjuſt riſe to have the more fearful fall. Both theſe are intimared in, Pſal. 1. 5. *Therefore the ungodly ſhall not ſtand the judgment, nor ſinners in the congregation of the righteous.* God raiſeth his own, that he may bring them to the Eternal Kingdom, and exalt them to a Glorious Throne, there to abide unmoved for ever: whereas the Wicked are raiſed, but it is in order to their being thrown down into the Lake of Fire, and falling into the bottomleſs Pit. Then will that Triumph have its glorious Accompliſhment, Pſal. 20. 8. *They are brought down and fallen, but we are riſen and ſtand upright.*

(5.) **THE** Reſurrection of theſe is an effect of Chriſt's Merit, whereas that of thoſe flows from his Sovereign juſtice. The Reſurrection of Believers muſt needs be precious, becauſe Chriſt hath purchaſed it for them. The great end of his Dying, was that we might live through him, 1 Joh. 4. 9. Now the Reſurrection is one part of this Life. Chriſt on this account calls himſelf the Reſurrection, Joh. 11. 25. which intends, not only the Efficient, but alſo the Meritorious Cauſe of it: And for that reaſon Chriſt tells us, that he is to riſe up his whom his Father hath given him, Joh. 6. 39. Whereas, the Reſurrection of the Ungodly, was not merited for them by Chriſt, but appointed in God's Counſel to them, and was only ſecured to Chriſt as Judge, which is one of the glorious Rewards of his Mediatorial Service, Act. 17. 31.

(6.) **THE** Reſurrection of Chriſt, hath a particular and peculiar influence into the Reſurrection of his Redeemed. As he died to purchaſe it for them, ſo he roſe again to confirm it to them. The Apoſtle, in 1 Cor. 15. grounds the Believers Faith of the Reſurrection of the Juſt, upon the Reſurrection of Chriſt, and makes ſo cloſe a Connection between them, that he lets us underſtand, that all our Gofpel-Faith ſtands or falls with our belief of Chriſt's Reſurrection, ver. 14. *And if Chriſt be not riſen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is alſo vain, &c.* Now there is a manifold Confirmation of God's Children in this Article, from the riſing of Chriſt. His Reſurrection affures us, that the purchaſe of ours is made. Hence that, Rom. 4. ult. *Who was delivered for our offences, and was raiſed again for our juſtification.* It witneſſeth that he hath made a perfect Conqueſt over Death, and it cannot hold us, when he requires us. It is to be an earnest for the Confirmation of our Faith, becauſe he roſe as the firſt-fruits; and his are to be the Harvest, ver. 20. He roſe as their Head, and

and therefore all his Members must follow after him. Now this is only the Consolation of Believers, and others have no Interest in it. Christ therefore gives this as the Reason of our assurance on this account, Joh. 14. 19. *Because I live, ye shall live also.*

THERE are divers Enquiries made about the Resurrection, which because they have more of Nicety and Curiosity in them, than matter of Edification, I shall pass over, only leaving this general Remark, viz. That whatsoever will be requisite for the perfect Glorification of the Bodies of Believers, or for the making of the Bodies of the Wicked fit to be *Vessels of Wrath* Eternally, will then be done to them, by the same Almighty Power, which will raise them up.

U S E. BE we all then advised, to lay in that we may enjoy the Felicity of this Resurrection. Paul tells us how sollicitous he was, *Phil. 3. 11.* Not merely that he might rise again, for he knew that was unavoidable, but that he might be happy in it. If all must rise again, surely they have poorly laid in, who never took care for any thing beyond the present time. How wretched must they needs be, who have laid out their utmost Care for this Life only, and never thought of, or provided, for the Life that is to come? Is there a Resurrection to Honour and to Contempt? it infinitely concerns every one of us, to use utmost care to obtain the one, and escape the other. And will it be an Unchangeable State that the Resurrection will put us into, and that according as Death finds us, when it makes a Seizure on us? They then are the only wise Persons, who make it the great Business of the present Life and Time, to make Provision, that being by Faith intitled to this Death & Resurrection of Christ, they may lie down and sleep in Jesus, and that when that Morning comes, they may arise clothed with his Image. See that you be risen with Christ now, in a thorough and true Conversion, then shall that Union which abode during your state of Death, continue in your Restauration; and if you can make sure to die in the grounded Faith of this, Death is untinged, the terror of it taken away. And while the Fore-tho't of a Resurrection affords matter of Horror to others, it will yield you abundant Consolation, to think, that in your *Flesh you shall see God.*

[M A R C H 12. 1700.]

SERMON CXLIII.

2. THAT in that Resurrection, Believers shall be raised in Glory. The Resurrection it