
S E R M O N S
O N
V A R I O U S S U B J E C T S
A N D
O C C A S I O N S.

By the late Reverend

Mr. *Samuel Wilson.*



Gertue Sculp.

S E R M O N S

VARIOUS SUBJECTS

A N D

O C C A S I O N S,

By the late Reverend

Mr. *Samuel Wilson*:

TWO OF WHICH

Were published in his Life-Time,

A N D

The Rest taken from his own MANUSCRIPTS.

To which is prefixed

A short ACCOUNT of his CHARACTER,
In an ORATION delivered at his *Interment*,
By JOSEPH STENNETT.

L O N D O N:

Printed for G. KEITH, at *Mercer's Chapel in Cheapside*;
and J. WARD, over-against the *Royal-Exchange*.

M.DCC.LIII.

P R E F A C E.

*T*HIS volume appears in the world to gratify the pressing instances of many of the worthy author's friends, who either received their first serious impressions under his awakening and instructive ministry, or were established in the important doctrines of christianity, and nourished up in experimental and practical religion by that good food which, by the grace of God, he dispensed among them. As it was the pleasure of the great Disposer of all things to call him to himself, in the midst of his days, and of his usefulness, it was their desire to recover, if possible, some of those discourses which they had heard from his

lips with much benefit and delight : and they have encouraged themselves to hope, that, though unassisted with the advantages of his serious, and persuasive manner of address from the pulpit, yet they might happily revive some of those influences they had formerly felt, and be of the same profit to others. These considerations prevailed on those, on whom the right of the author's manuscripts devolved, at his decease, to consent to this publication.

THE two first sermons were printed some years ago ; and are to be found in an excellent defence of some of the most important principles of our holy religion, which, as the tide of infidelity and corruption was threatening to bear down all before it, was attempted by a set of able and worthy divines, some years ago, in this city ; and among whom Mr. Wilson bore a part ; which was so well executed,

cuted, as to render it the request of some, who mourn over the continuance of the same opposition to the gospel, that they might stand here also.

ALL the rest are discourses which were never designed for the press, but have been deciphered, from his own notes in short-hand, by such of his most intimate friends, who were acquainted with the character in which they were wrote.

WHATEVER be the censure that may possibly fall on the hand that, under these disadvantages, from a tender regard to the memory of his friend, and the hope of their further usefulness to the souls of men, has ventured to prepare these papers for the press, a very little candour will be sufficient to secure the author from any disgrace; especially when it is considered, that, as it was seldom his custom

to confine himself to his notes in the pulpit, so, from the happy liberty he enjoyed there, they usually received considerable improvement.

BUT notwithstanding these disadvantages, and the mistakes of transcribers must have rendered many emendations necessary, yet the reader may be assured, that such caution has been used in this respect, as strictly to preserve Mr. Wilson's sentiments, and to secure his just title to these sermons, as his own.

IT will be observed that the choice of the subjects which has been made for this volume, consists of some of the doctrinal, and others of the more experimental and practical kind. To which I will only add, with an humble dependance on the divine blessing, that if these discourses afford as much profit and pleasure to those who read them, as they have given
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the editor in the revisal, the design of their publication will be happily answered; and that, as Mr. Wilson's other printed sermons, when collected together, make one volume, of about the same size with this, so, if this meets with suitable encouragement, it may be followed with a third.

JOSEPH STENNETT.

A
FUNERAL ORATION,
A T

The INTERMENT of the Reverend
Mr. SAMUEL WILSON, in
the Burial-Ground at *Bunhill*,
October 12, 1750.

WHATEVER be the triumphs of
the king of terrors on these
mournful occasions, or the dis-
grace that is brought on our nature by death ;
whatever variety of miseries we must our-
selves endure in our way to the grave, or
the pangs we feel in our attendance on the
remains of our friends thither ; or, indeed,
whatever be the awful consequences of dy-
ing ; yet as the light of nature discovers,
and acknowledges an infinite display of the
sovereignty of the Divine Being in this im-
portant concern ; so the sacred scriptures tes-
tify, not only to the wisdom and justice of
such a procedure, but to the mercy and good-

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ness of it too. It is a procedure which, one would imagine, should silence all the adversaries of divine revelation ; since no scheme besides can satisfy a rational enquirer about it : and it should carry the strongest evidence on our minds of that ruin which the sin of our first parents has brought upon all mankind, and of which the bible gives us the only clear and explicit account.

AND tho' we find, by sad experience, the successful endeavours of corrupt nature to overcome the other dictates of conscience, yet here, —at the mouth of a grave, we have such a standing conviction, as the hardest hearts, in their near approaches to it, find it exceeding difficult to elude. Thus, as the last enemy, which a good man has to conquer, is death ; so the last conviction that sin is able to stifle in the breasts of the wicked, is the apprehension of the horrors and dangers which attend it. And yet, such is the stupidity of human nature, that even this suppression of all reason, and all sense of religion, is, too often, the dreadful case.

IF reason did its office, how could it be possible for any one of us, in this great assembly, to behold the ensigns of mortality around us, to traverse the fields of the dead, and to tread on the dust of thousands, to fix our eyes on an open sepulchre, and to see the dear remains of a friend committed to its silence and darkness, to become the prey of corruption, and the food of worms, and to know too that in a few days this will be our own case; how could it be possible, I say, if rational reflection took place, for any one of us to see, and consider these things with a negligent and unaffected heart?

BUT the emotions of our minds should surely be much more quickened, and the instruction come with greater weight, when we attend the funeral solemnities of men of any eminency and considerable usefulness in the world; more so still, when they have been eminent for piety and religion; and, I was going to say, most of all, when we behold the heralds of life themselves laid down in the grave, and become the sub-

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subjects of mortality. For we have daily the repeated and sorrowful evidence, that men of every rank and character must die. — Our *fathers where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?*

THE reverend and excellent person, whose grave we surround, was descended from a line of pious and worthy ancestors, both on his father's and his mother's side, among whom were several very worthy ministers of the gospel. He had so happy a texture of mind, such fine natural parts, and was so very early imbued with remarkable evidences of a divine work upon his soul, as led his religious friends, in his tender years, to hope that Heaven had pointed him out for the service of the sanctuary: and time soon made it appear that they were not mistaken.

PREPARED with suitable study, adorned with useful literature, stock'd with spiritual experience, warmed with zeal for GOD, and love to the souls of men, and richly furnished with the unction from above, he came forth into
his

his sacred work; and approved himself an able teacher of others, at a time of life, when but few enter upon a public profession of religion themselves. He was favoured with an healthful constitution; a constitution which was hardly ever much shaken with any disease, till that which brought him hither. His industry was suited to it. And such was the sweetness and benevolence of his temper, that, as it readily engaged him in offices of kindness to others, tho' frequently attended with much labour and fatigue to himself; so it seldom suffered him to be ruffled with resentment at any ungrateful treatment he met with in return. With all these happy talents, he soon became a very popular and successful preacher. And that this popularity was not the effect of novelty, and superficial attainments, appears, in that it was not only the blaze of a few months or a year, as is often the case, but it continued with him thro' the whole course of his ministry. So that, by the blessing of GOD on his labours, he raised a congregation from low circumstances, to become one of the most flourishing in this city.

And

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And he discharged his pastoral office with that seriousness, prudence, and temper, as was attended with such a series of increase and harmony, as few communities have, for so long a time, enjoyed.

BUT neither honourable descent, neither genius, nor learning, neither the ornaments of nature, nor of grace, neither love to GOD, nor love to men, nor faith, nor usefulness will, we see, secure the continuance of men here beyond the limits of the divine decree. Not the art of medicine, not the aching hearts of kindred and of friends, not the tears and groans of a large, and beloved flock, nor the fervent prayers of fellow-labourers in the same service, can respite the commission, when the hour is come : for it is the just and reasonable appointment of the great Disposer of all things, that *man* should *die*, and *there is no discharge in this war*.

WHAT makes the stroke the more feeling, is, that he is removed from us at a time, when the growth of the most destructive errors, the increase of every kind of wickedness, and the sad and general decay of vital religion among

good men themselves, seem to render the continuance of persons of remarkable piety, and abilities, of very great consequence to the best interest in the world. And it is still the more affecting, that he bowed his head in the midst his strength, and when a large treasure of experience, and great ripeness of judgment, gave us encouraging hopes of his growing usefulness, for many years to come; and that his life also should, at such a time as this, become a sacrifice to the zeal of his heart, and the fatigues of his work. These are some of the mysteries of providence, which tho' we understand not now, will be unfolded hereafter.

HOWEVER, we must, we ought to be reconciled to the will of the wise and righteous Ruler of the world, and Head of the church, who has thought fit to call him home: and we have no doubt but he is entered into that *rest, which remains for the people of GOD*. Nor can it be conceived what a peculiar pleasure that *rest* must afford to a servant of *Christ*, who has *laboured* as he has done; or with what exalted delight, a welcome, from the lips of

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Jesus into *that* world, must have been received by one, who had so long *determined to know nothing but him, and him crucified, in this;*—by one, the business of whose life was to spread the Saviour's grace, of which himself had been so rich a partaker; to lead sinners to that precious fountain of his blood, in which his own soul had been bathed; and to defend the glories of his person, and the virtue of his righteousness and salvation, on which he had long placed all his own dependance for justification and acceptance with **G O D.**

WE shall no more sit under the powerful conviction of his manly and nervous reasoning;—no more be charmed with his eloquent persuasion, or be struck with the happy mixture of his grave and familiar address;—no more enjoy the force of his various, affectionate, and pertinent pleadings before the throne of grace, or feel our souls melted by his tears into the same devout and heavenly temper.

BUT it becomes us, I say, to submit; and it is our business now to make the best improve-

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provements of so awakening, and so instructive a providence. And what are these? but that we should be awfully, and more effectually convinced of the absolute right which the Divine Being will for ever maintain over all his works? what,—but that we should entertain a renewed, and a deeper sense than ever of the malignity of sin, which continues to make such ravage in the church, as well as in the world? what,—but that we should inscribe vanity upon every temporal enjoyment, and uncertainty on the peaceful and uninterrupted continuance of blessings of a higher nature, while we pass thro' this vale of tears, and land of changes? what,—but that we should look forward for our comfort, under all the distresses of this weary wilderness, to that world, where there is no sin, nor sorrow, and where death shall have no more power?

It is an honour to the family of the deceased, that they have been related to so worthy a man: and they, as well as many others, will tell how he adorned the characters of the husband, the father, the brother, and the friend.

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The best support, that every surviving relative can have under their present very great affliction, is to be derived from that treasure of precious promises which often comforted his heart, and were the frequent subjects of his ministry, —— promises which remain, tho' he is gone. His amiable example also lives, and will always live, I trust, in their remembrance, tho' he is dead, and they shall *see his face no more*. To which I will add, that love itself, which usually opens the floodgates of sorrow wide, on these occasions, will help to moderate theirs, when they reflect, that the greater their *loss* is, it gives them the more illustrious idea of his *gain*.

I AM sensible that many of his late charge, and, among them, not a few of his spiritual children are come hither, to pay the last respect to his dear remains, and to pour out the affectionate tribute of their tears on his tomb, —— and it is a just and decent tribute. When *Lazarus* died, an affectionate disciple of our Lord said to the rest, *Let us*
also

also go, that we may die with him : and Jesus himself wept on that sorrowful occasion. But then, they should consider, that religion sets the proper bounds to our grief, and it also instructs us, that tears are not the only tokens of respect, which are due to the memory of good men, when they are taken from us. No ——— they are to remember that their dear pastor, tho' he is dead, yet speaketh, ——— speaks still by that doctrine which he taught them, and that pattern which he set before them, while living ; ——— speaks to them now by his own death, and tells them how frail they are, and how soon those that bear may be called to their account, as well as those that speak. May they so remember him who broke the bread of life to them, and, by divine appointment, had the rule over them, and watched for their souls, that they may follow his faith, considering the end of his conversation, and be partakers at last with him in his joy.

AND let those who have often felt their consciences roused by his awakening dis-

courses, or their souls, for a season, melted by his most affectionate address, and yet continue in their sins, let them, I say, consider, that his lips are now shut for ever, and his commission is sealed up. Let them seriously reflect, that the *gospel* which he preached to them will be *a savour*, if not *of life unto life*, yet *of death unto death*. And let them fear lest, in their final neglect of his faithful and unwearied warnings, he should prove *a swift witness against* them, in that tremendous day of account, which cannot be far off.

MAY we that are ministers, and have had our labours, in many respects, united with his, who have had the advantage of his friendship, and have often taken *sweet counsel together* with him, may we likewise make the best use of so affecting a dispensation. Our work also will be soon finished, and *the places which know us now*, will, very soon, *know us no more* for ever. May we therefore be quickened to greater activity and faithfulness in the discharge of those important services in which we

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are engaged, and be stirred up more carefully to prepare for the same summons; that *when our Lord comes we may be also ready.*

To conclude: let us all be comforted with these considerations, that, tho' ministers die, *the word of GOD, the gospel of Christ Jesus liveth and abideth for ever*: — that tho' the children must pass thro' the *valley of death*, in their way to their *Father's house*, yet their Father always lives: — that tho' their elder Brother has died, yet it was for their sins; tho' he has descended in the grave, yet he has perfumed it by lying there; and, that tho' *he was dead*, yet *he now liveth*, and *behold, he is alive for evermore.* *He is risen again for their justification, and ever lives to make intercession for them.* He is *the resurrection and the life*, and whosoever *believeth in him, tho' he were dead, yet shall he also live.* And, blessed be GOD, I trust many of us can say, that tho' we must die, yet *our lives are hid with Christ in GOD*; that *the spirit of life, which is in Christ Jesus, hath made us free from the law*

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law of sin and death; and that we have room to hope, that, when Christ who is our life shall appear, we shall also appear with him in glory.

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