

in the state of the wicked in death is spoken of as a sleep, as if it was in no ways different from that of the righteous who sleep in Jesus: "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." But the same state to different persons may possess a very different character. The soul of the doomed criminal may to another person be but a pleasant sleeping chamber. Argyle found his heap of straw a couch of repose. So, the grave is a bed of rest to the believer, and to the believer alone. It is not so to the unbeliever. To him it is a prison house: it retains all its hideous and loathsome features: it is a cell of ghastliness and corruption; it is the unmitigated grave!

In this sense may the believer be said to sleep in death: death to him is repose: the grave is a couch of rest. The appalling character of death, and the hideous features of the grave, are alike changed.

But the believer sleeps "in Jesus"; that is his body is in Christ's keeping. The consolatory truth is here intimated, that the very dust of believers is kept by Christ till the last and great day. It might seem an extravagant notion that what is so loathsome to ourselves after death, that we are fain to bury it out of our sight, should be so precious in the eye of Christ, and carefully watched and preserved by him; that he who guides the revolutions of worlds should have his eye upon some particles of dust, till the time when he will raise it from the grave, and give it new life and consistency in a form like unto his own glorious body.—But the truth is undoubtedly taught in the Scriptures. It is implied in the very expression: "them which sleep in Jesus": "the dead which *die* in the Lord." There is a union between the believer and Christ, which death does not sever, and which exists amid all the marks of degradation which are to be found in the grave. The body is a part of our compound nature; and as believers are a part of Christ's body the church, the bodies of believers are united to Christ, form a portion of his mystical body, and are not renounced, or cast away, even in death. Wonderful as the truth is, then, it is not the less a truth that the bodies of believers are carefully kept by Christ, so that they will be raised at the last in no feature altered, although in every feature glorified, made like unto Christ's glorious body. And thus even while

they are in their graves, they sleep in Jesus, they rest in their beds: the grave is but a place of rest; where they have ceased for ever from earthly toil, and where all suffering is at an end.

But we are farther told that—"them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him".

The resurrection of believers, we are taught, is in consequence of Christ's resurrection. The apostle says: "It we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him": where the connection between Christ's resurrection and that of believers is plainly recognised. The same connection is traced by the apostle, and argued more at length, in the 15th chap. of 1st Cor., 12-23. Now, the idea in this connexion is not that the resurrection itself, but that the blessedness of the resurrection, of believers, will be in consequence of Christ's resurrection. The wicked will be raised up as well as believers, but their resurrection is in no sense in consequence of Christ's, has no connexion with it, and they will be raised up only to punishment. But Christ's resurrection has secured for the believer a resurrection after a *similar manner*. "Christ the first fruits; afterwards they who are Christ's at his coming." The resurrection of Christ was the seal put upon his work, and by that work he secured redemption to all who believe. Christ's people were included in him as their representative in all that he did: hence even in his resurrection he was "the first fruits of them that slept;" and, we are told, "as in Adam all died (all who were represented by Adam) so in Christ shall all (all who were represented by him) be made alive." They died in the first Adam, they are quickened in the second: "Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." The apostle contends for this, on the fact that Christ died and rose again. "If we believe;" not as though they did not believe, but, thus believing, they might be assured that, them which slept in Jesus, God would bring with him.

But there is more than the doctrine of the resurrection here: there is the gathering together of Christ's at his coming: "Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." Being raised with a glorious body, they will go to swell Christ's train when he comes in his kingdom. They will form a part of that glorious retinue with which Christ will come to