

On Death

A man is not completely born until he be dead. Why then should we grieve that a new child is born among the immortals, a new member added to their happy society?

We are spirits. That bodies should be lent to us, while they can afford us pleasure, assist us in acquiring knowledge, or in doing good to our fellow creatures, is a kind & benevolent act of God. When they become unfit for these purposes and afford us pain instead of pleasure, instead of an aid become an incumbrance, and answer none of the intentions for which they were given, it is equally kind & benevolent that a way is provided by which we may get rid of them. Death is that way....

Our friend and we were invited abroad on a party of pleasure which is to last forever. His chair was ready first and he is gone before us. We could not all conveniently start together; and why should you and I be grieved at this, since we are soon to follow & know where to find him?

B. Franklin on his brother John's death 1756

Charles 1979