



S E R M O N II.

SAINTS compleat in GLORY.



I COR. XIII. 10.

*But when that which is perfect is come,
then that which is in part shall be
done away.*

LT is a most affecting Thought,
that no one Man, whilst here,
is as wise and holy as he ought
to be; nor an Individual of
the human Species so happy,
but he wishes to be more so;
nor is it more surprizing than true,
that the best have generally the worst Usage, Trouble,
C 2 ble,

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ble, Reproach, Opposition, and Persecution, attending them almost all their Way to Glory: So that with the Apostle, they agree in concluding, that if in this World only they have hope, *they are of all Men most miserable.* This may seem, at first View, to cast a dark Shade on Providence, and reflect on the Wisdom and Goodness of the Judge of the whole Earth; but when we call to Mind, that all necessary Supports are given to the Saints by the Way, and now and then a refreshing Cordial handed down, to encourage their Faith, quicken their Hope, and that, e'er long, the present Scenes, which we are sometimes tempted to think, are shuffled together in a Kind of Confusion, shall be brought out in their proper Order and respective Beauties; when it will be fully known, that it was good for them to be afflicted, and that only where it was absolutely necessary they were in Trouble; and whilst all Things under a divine Agency, worked together for their Good: They will then see with Transports of Joy, and the utmost Gratitude, that their forest Trials and Afflictions were but light and momentary, working out for them a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory.

God has never promised his People two Heavens, one in Time, another in Eternity; Part they have in Hand, and a most sweet, precious and invaluable Part it is; but

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but the best is reserved to last ; for, *when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.* Where we may observe,

- I. An Intimation of the Certainty of the Blessing, the Apostle speaks of it with full Assurance it shall come.
- II. The Distance of it ; it shall come, but not as yet.
- III. The Desirableness of it ; it was what he waited and longed for, as the Consummation of Bliss, and the crowning Mercy.

I. Perfection, though unattainable here, shall certainly meet the Saint in Glory.

This is secured by the immutable Purpose of him whose Counsel shall stand ; and *who is not a Man that he should lye, or the Son of Man that he should repent.* He hath not appointed his People unto *Wrath, but to obtain Salvation*^a. *It is his good Pleasure to give them a Kingdom*^b. He hath chosen them in his Son, before the Foundation of the World, that they should be holy and without blame before him in Love, and they shall at length obtain the Inheritance, to which they were predestinated according to the Purpose of him, who worketh all Things after the

^a 1 Theff. v. 9.

^b Luke xii. 32.

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Counsel of his own Will^c. These he did fore-know and predestinate, to be conformed to the Image of his Son^a, and will therefore call, justify, and glorify them.

This his gracious Design he has made known in many great and precious Promises; which are not yea and nay, but yea and Amen in Christ, to the Glory of his Truth and Faithfulness: He hath said, that *he will give Grace and Glory, and withhold no good Thing from them who walk uprightly^e. He commanded his Prophets of old, to say to the Righteous, that it shall be well with them; and as he numbers the Hairs of their Heads, whilst on Earth, so, since the Beginning of the World, Men have not heard, nor perceived by the Ear, neither hath the Eye seen, besides God himself, what he hath prepared for those who fear him^f. Our Lord is very express on this Head, when he says of his Sheep, *I give unto them eternal Life, and they shall never perish^g. In my Father's House are many Mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a Place for you. And if I go, I will come again, and receive you unto my self; that where I am, there ye may be also^h. With this View he took Flesh, obey'd the Law, and became a Curse, that in the full**

^c Ephes. i. 4, and 11.
lxxxiv. 11.
xiv. 2, 3.

^f Isa. lxiv. 4.

^d Rom. viii. 29, 30.
^g John x. 28.

^e Psal.
^h Chap.

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Merit of his Righteousness, he might demand it of him, who can now be just, and the Justifier of every Believer; *Father, I will that those also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, to behold my Glory*ⁱ. And the great Apostle speaking in the Name of all the Saints, says, *We know, that if the earthly House of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a Building of God, an House not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens*^k; and, *when Christ, who is our Life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in Glory*^l. And in the exulting Language of Triumph, he observes, there was *laid up for him a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, should give him at that Day*; and adds, *not to me only, but to them also who love his appearing*^m. In the lively Expectation of this, the holy Martyrs, that Cloud of Witnesses, took joyfully the spoiling of their Goods, and laid down their Lives, knowing in themselves, that they had *in Heaven a better and a more enduring Substance*ⁿ: Nor is it the peculiar Mercy of faithful Ministers, but of all the Redeemed of the Lord, *that when the chief Shepherd appears, they shall receive a Crown of Glory which fadeth not away*; when they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the Sun

ⁱ John xvii. 24.
^m 2 Tim. iv. 8.

^k 2 Cor. v. 1.
ⁿ Heb. x. 3, 4.

^l Col. iii. 4.

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light on them, or any Heat. For the Lamb which is in the Midst of the Throne, shall lead them to Fountains of living Waters, and feed them with heavenly Manna: And God shall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes; and there shall be no more Death, neither Sorrow, nor Crying, neither shall there be any more Pain; for the former Things shall be passed away °. Nor,

II. Is the Blessing less sure for its being distant and future? There is a Rest, tho' it remains for the People of God. *Paul* was in a Strait, and longed to be gone; but he must wait the appointed Time: Few Saints, comparatively, are soon ripe for Glory; God loves to be trusted; nor is there an Opportunity for the Exercise of many of the Christian Graces in the heavenly World. Faith, Hope and Patience, Benevolence to our Fellow-creatures, and Liberality to the Saints, have their Use and Beauty in the Church militant, Self-denial, Self-judging, and holy Resolutions in the Strength of Christ, to maintain the Conflict with spiritual Enemies, will not be called for in the Church triumphant. We must tarry a while, to be instructed in the useful Lessons of the Vanity of the Creature, the Evil of Sin, our own Inconstancy, and Unworthiness

° Rev. vii, and xxi.

on the Account of it, before we are admitted to full Victory and Triumph: Nor should the Believer, though detained for a Time, faint, or be weary, indulge Impatience, or Discontent when he thinks of his Apostasy from God, his Forfeiture of Life, Desert of Misery, and that he is employ'd, whilst here, though in a lower Capacity, in the Service of his God, and for the Honour of the Redeemer. The Father does not presently put his Son into the Possession of an Inheritance; but waits till he has Discretion and Prudence to make a right Use of it. The Husbandman waiteth for the precious Fruits of the Earth, and hath long Patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter Rain; and to be over hasty to be gone, bespeaks that we are weary of our Work, or uneasy to suffer; we may sometimes, indeed, with the Psalmist, warrantably wish for *the Wings of a Dove, to flee away and be at Rest*: But our Lord's Resignation should be a Pattern to ours, and teach us to wait the Determination of Providence, and say, *Not as we will, but as thou wilt*. Time hastens with speedy Wings; our Day of Duty and Trial, at longest, is but for a Moment, when compared with Eternity; nor will the Head of the Church be any longer without his Members, or any Part of his Fulness, than is absolutely necessary; and, perhaps, as the worn out Mariner, makes his de-

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desired Port with a peculiar Pleasure, after he has weathered the Storms, and escaped the Rocks and Shelves of a tedious and hazardous Voyage, it may add an exquisite Relish to the Glories of Immortality, to reflect on the Toil and Labour, the Difficulties and Temptations which attended the Saint in a State of Imperfection: And with this View the Apostle,

III. Speaks of it as a most desirable Blessing; *When that which is perfect is come.*

Universal Nature abhors Pain, flees from every apprehended Evil, and would avoid Trouble. Suffering is not eligible for its own Sake; and yet, is there a Day passes without some Degree of Grief and Bitterness in the Remembrance of former Grievances, the Sensation of present Calamities, or Fear of future Misery? Poverty has its Sorrows and painful Cares; Riches, for their Associates, Fear and Disquietude; Is there that Pleasure on Earth that has not also its Pain, that Joy which is uninterrupted, or that flourishing Estate that may not as soon be distressed? How uneasy are we often with our selves? What gnawing Anxiety for the Good of our Children or Friends; and who can promise a continual Security from the desolating Judgments of Famine, Pestilence, or War. But admit we are favoured with Health of Body, Peace in our Families, and grow-

growing Prosperity ; though we should pass through the World with full Reputation, respected and unenvied ; which is not to be expected in the present Situation ; yet the horrid Impiety, detestable Abominations, the Blasphemy, Profaneness and Irreligion of the Multitude, and the Miscarriages, Formality and careless Walk of Professors, must be grievous and afflicting, to a Mind born from Heaven : But where there is nothing of this to make us wish for a Removal, the numerous Corruptions which are found in our own Hearts, the Omission of Duties, or the cold and lifeless Manner of discharging them ; the want of Zeal for God, and Love to Christ, that we have Reason to complain of ; the sad Interruptions of our Communion with him, and the slow Proficiency we make in our Likeness to him, are very powerful Arguments to make us long for Perfection : Here the fiery Darts of Satan fly thick round about us ; and how often are we defiled, as well as dejected, by his Influence ; nor can the most watchful, or best furnished Christian, always promise himself a Security from his Treachery, or his Power ; God will indeed, bruise him under his Feet shortly ; but he has never assured him of Success in every particular Conflict ; and when, at any Time, foiled, what Shame and Confusion attends the Recollection ! Under these Circumstances, no
Won-

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Wonder the Saint as weak and helpless in himself, in the Midst of Enemies, liable to a Train of successive Evils, thinks of Perfection with an eager Solitude, and speaks of it as a most desirable Blessing.

And has God reserved, and thus engaged his Faithfulness, to possess his People of perfect and unmixed Blessedness in the upper World? Is there a large and pure Inheritance provided for them; and shall no Enemy be suffered to rob them of it, or alienate their Title to it? How shouldst thou, O my Soul! conscious of Imperfection in the Creature, seriously inquire, Shall this be thine? What is thy Claim? What the Foundation of thy Hope and Expectations? Is the Mercy not worth a Thought? Or wilt thou dismiss it to a more convenient Season? Remember, a Fulness of Misery will be as certainly the Portion of the Ungodly, as a Perfection of Glory will be the Crown of the Saint. Where is thy Heart? it may guide thee to thy Treasure. Will Riches, Honour, or Pleasure, satisfy thee? Is it an Increase of Corn, Wine and Oil, thou art grasping after? these may be had without a Covenant Portion in thy God; but Heaven cannot. Is the Lord of Life and Death, who has the Keys of the invisible World, thy Friend? Or, art thou alienated from him by wicked Works, and determined he shall not reign over thee? Eternal Life is
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not the mere Fancy of Poets, or the Dream of Enthusiasts; nor described to shew the Orator's Skill, only to amuse and entertain, but a solid Reality, in the Hands of Christ, to give to whom he pleases, revealed in the infallible Oracles of Truth, and only to be enjoy'd by the Believer.

And how should the Saint blush and be ashamed, almost to call any Thing his own, in Comparison of this incorruptible and unfading Inheritance; his Possessions may fail, his Health be impaired, his Peace be destroy'd, and his Life taken from him; but his God, his Redeemer, his Heaven, are Mercies beyond the Reach of the Subtilty or Power of the most designing or rapacious Hands, either of Fraud or Violence. How imprudent to be taken with that which either is not, or is Vanity and Vexation of Spirit! How foolish to be vain, or proud of what may be lost to Morrow! They, and only they, are happy, who have Treasures which neither Moth can corrupt, nor Thieves break through and steal. Under all their present Disadvantages, they are safe in Time, and at length, shall be perfectly blessed, to Eternity.

What that Perfection will be, is beyond the Reach of Imagination to conceive, and the Power of Language fully to describe; but some faint Guesses may be made of it, as it will relate to the Soul and Body of the
glori-

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glorified Believer, or as it respects the Place where he will dwell, the Company with whom he shall converse, the Character he shall bear, the Imployment he shall be engaged in, and the Entertainment he shall be blessed with for ever.

1. As it relates to the Soul, that immaterial and immortal Part of us, capable of Reasoning and Reflection, Choice or Refusal, Happiness or Misery; The three governing Powers of which are, the Understanding, Will and Affections; as to each of which, the Saint shall be perfect.

(1.) In his Understanding: How far this will be enlarged in the other World, is not revealed; but when every Obstruction arising from the indispos'd or distemper'd Organs of the Body, shall be entirely removed, all Clouds of Darkness, and Mists of Ignorance for ever vanish away, and the Soul clear and open to receive Ideas, shall have no Difficulty in Perception, and held close and intense, without Pain, by the Father of Spirits, in the Contemplation of surrounding Objects; we have Reason to conclude, its Capacity will proportionably enlarge with its Imployment.

The Learned need not be told at what Expence of the animal Spirits, and the Fruit of unwearied Application, they obtain the Acquaintance they can at best pretend to, with Things natural, historical, or
divine;

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divine; and, after all their painful Searches, how uncertain their Conjectures, how various their Opinions, and how much more yet unknown than what has been discover'd! Those who have spent most Time, and imploy'd the greatest Diligence in the Pursuit of Knowledge, have been free to own, in the Close of Life, that they have gained little more than to know that they *knew but little*; but in the Land of Light and Vision, the plain, humble, though whilst here, illiterate Christian, shall then see as he is seen, and know as he is known. The Croud of pleasing Objects, which every where will present themselves to his View, shall be under a divine Arrangement, without Disorder or Confusion: The Secrets of Nature, the Wonders of Providence, and the Mysteries of Grace, shall each successively entertain and delight him; nor will there be the least Danger of Mistake, or Possibility of Error, no Difficulty in conceiving, nor Hazard of mis-judging; in God's Light they shall see Light, not through a Glass darkly, but immediately, and without an interposing Medium; and, perhaps, the Faculty may increase with the Exercise, and enlarge in its Capacity with its Pleasure. Whether the Knowledge of the Blessed will be in any Degree, or altogether intuitive, or received, as now, in a way of Reasoning and Reflection, is not so easy to deter-

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determine ; but it's highly probable, that in this, as well as in other Respects, they will resemble their glorious Companions, and be like the Angels of God.

(2.) The Will, which, originally, was exactly conformable to the Mind of God, and unhappily received a criminal Bias to Evil, in Consequence of the Fall, will then constantly and invariably follow the Dictates of the enlighten'd Understanding. The highest Glory of the reasonable Creature is, to be obedient to the Sovereign who made him : And as God necessarily, though most freely, wills every Thing that is good ; so his Children shall bear this Part of his Image, and be made like to him in this Respect, as well as others, when they come to Heaven. Here the Judgment is often at a Loss, and the best of Men unstable, inconstant and wavering ; one while the Will seems to be determined for God, and the Resolution firmly fixed ; but no sooner does a difficult Duty present it self, or an unexpected Trial face us, or the Enemy at hand, with some alluring Temptation, but we are like the deceitful Bow, soon turning aside, forgetful of our Promises, and over-looking our Obligations, and when to will is present with us, so feeble frequently is the Power, that how to perform that which is good, we know not : This the Apostle acknowledged in his own Case ; and it made him cry out,

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O wretched Man that I am ! Who shall deliver me^p ? In Heaven it self, there will be a Work to be done for God ; they who are in his Temple above, and before his Throne, serve him Day and Night ; not with Reluctance and Lassitude, which was their Burden in this World, but with the utmost Freedom and Delight : No Excuses are there sought for, or pleaded ; but uninterrupted and everlasting Homage is as much their Choice as their Duty ; nor can it be otherways ; since,

(3.) Their Affections are as pure as their Will is holy. The fore-mentioned Apostle, perhaps, loved his Master, and his Master's Work, as much as any of his Servants before or since his Incarnation ; he delighted in the Law of his God after the inward Man ; but complains of a *Law in his Members warring against the Law of his Mind, and bringing him into Captivity to the Law of Sin^q*. He could say, he loved his Redeemer, and counted all Things but Loss for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ, for whom he had *suffered the Loss of all Things, and did count them but Dung that he might win Christ^r* ; yea, he denounced an Anathema against him who *loves not the Lord Jesus in Sincerity^s* ; and yet, even in this he had not attained, nor

^p Rom. vii. 24.
^s 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

^q Rom. vii. 22, 23.

^r Phil. iii. 8.

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was he perfect, whilst surrounded by so many Objects calling of his Affections, and tempting him to divide some Share among them.

That God may justly claim the Throne in our Hearts, and challenge the Supream in our Affections, will not be disputed by any who believe that he is infinitely amiable in himself, and hath loved them with an everlasting Love ; the free Gift of his Son, that amazing Instance of his Regard to his People ; the sending the Spirit into their Hearts, to illuminate, convince, and convert them ; the frequent Visits of Love he condescends to make in Communion and Fellowship with them ; the Promises relating to their present Guidance and Protection, and the Incouragement he has given them to hope for unfading Pleasures at his right Hand in Glory, all conspire to ingage them to love him with all their Hearts, and with all their Soul ; but alas ! they have too much Occasion for the mournful Complaint, that there is so little Proportion between their Experience and Obligations. In the Day of their Espousals they think they could follow him in a Wilderness, and in a Land unfown ; but too soon they discover the glowing Warmth of their Zeal and Affections abate, and that there is too much Occasion for the Charge, that they have left their first Love. How often does the World, in its Profits and Plea-

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Pleasures, take the Place of God? How apt are we to be taken and insnared by the present sensible Objects, and the invifible Realities of Futurity too much slighted or forgotten? How does our Family Concerns, and our Fondness for Relations, engage our Thoughts, and make us loath to leave them; though in cooler or more fedate Reflection, we cannot but judge the Exchange to be every way to our Advantage: But in Heaven our Affections will be wholly spiritual, and unalterably determined on their proper Objects: Which leads us to confider,

The moral Refemblance which the Soul, when made perfect, fhall bear to its great Original.

When the Saints are firft renewed in the Spirits of their Minds, they *put on the new Man, which, after God, is created in Righteousnefs and true Holinefs*; which is faid to be the *Image of him who created them*^r. As they have bore the Image of the firft *Adam*, being shapen in Iniquity, and conceived in Sin, fo they are *predestinated to be conformed to the Image of the fecond Adam*^u. And, after they have been gradually, by frequent delightful Converfes with him here on Earth, and fpiritual Views of his Glory, changing into his Likenefs, from one Degree of it to another, they fhall at length be

^r Ephes. iv. 24. Col. iii. 10.

^u Rom. viii. 29.

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fashion'd like him in the Purity, Integrity, and Holiness of his Mind, as well as be made like to his glorious Body. God is infinitely holy; he dwells in a high and holy Place. Angels are pure and spotless Creatures: Nothing that defileth, or is defiled, can possibly enter the new *Jerusalem*; for *without Holiness no Man can see the Lord*: The People of God therefore are sanctified in Part, by the washing of Regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; they are enabled to see the Beauties of Holiness, the Deformity of Sin, and to press after Perfection; they would be holy even as God is holy; but this will not be their Mercy in Kind, as it never can be in Degree, till Christ their Head, who loved and gave himself for them, shall have fully sanctified them with the washing of Water by the Word, and presents them to himself as a glorious Church, not having Spot or Wrinkle, or any such Thing, holy and unblameable in his Sight: Thus the Spirits of just Men will be made like to the Father of Spirits, not meerly in their natural, or intellectual Powers and Faculties; but especially in that Purity, Goodness and Righteousness, which are the most amiable Attributes of the divine Nature.

How should this serve to comfort the Believer, when mourning over the Imperfection of his Knowledge in this World, he is often
often

often grieved that he knows so little of himself, his Redeemer, and spiritual Things; and indeed, at best, his Knowledge, at present, is but like that of a Child under Age; it is his Mercy that he is made wise unto Salvation; but he breathes after farther and more intimate Acquaintance with heavenly Things; and tho' there may be some Room for his complaining of the Weakness of his Capacity, the Darkness and Confusion of his Understanding, this shall not always be the Case; yet a little while, and the Eye of the Soul shall be clear, enlarg'd and strengthen'd, his Conceptions proper, just and regular, and his Knowledge as abundant as he could wish, no Vail any longer on the Object, or Disorder in the Faculty.

And, how should the sad Experience of the Remains of Sin, the Power of our unruly Passions, the unhappy Reluctance we find to every Thing that is good, and too great an Inclination to that which is evil; how prone our Affections are to wander after forbidden Objects, or to exceed all Bounds, where, if duly moderated, they would be lawful and warrantable, whilst Sin, like a Leprosy, adheres to the Soul, and mixes something of its deadly Poison with all our Thoughts, Desires, Aims and Expectations; How should this make us wish for that World where we shall be pure as God is pure? when the Soul, no longer hinder'd by the Weakness of

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the Flesh, and perfectly deliver'd from the Being, as well as from the Power and Dominion of Sin, shall love, reverence, and serve its God and Sovereign with the utmost Spirituality, Vigour and Delight, shining in his beatific Presence, in all the Beauties of Holiness.

And how may this serve to reconcile the Mind of the Believer to the Determination of Providence, that his Soul must, e'er long, be separated from his Body, and, the Union between those two Companions be dissolved, each remaining in a State of Distance from the other, till the Morning of the Resurrection; since his immortal Part will be well employ'd, serving God Day and Night in his Temple, and his unimbodied Spirit abundantly replenish'd with the Joys of the celestial Kingdom. Whether this will be immediately upon Death, or in some distant, unknown Period of Futurity, or in the general Resurrection, has been disputed, and shall be particularly consider'd in the following Discourse.

