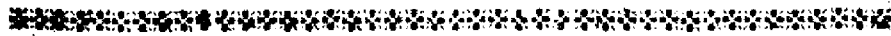




## S E R M O N I V .

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.*



WE have seen how the Soul of the departed Saint will be glorious on its Separation from the Body, we are now to take a View of the material Part, that frail and dying Part, which will, e'er long, be laid in the Grave, to awake out of the Dust in the Morning of the Resurrection.

And

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And here we must consider the Tabernacle as taken down at the divine Command, as under the Care of Christ, whilst in its silent Repository, and as called forth by him to be cloathed with Beauties, and fashion'd like unto his own glorious Body. The Wicked are cut off in God's Anger, like the leprous House, often thrown down with Violence, and always with Execration. But not a Circumstance in the Death of the Saints but is determin'd by infinite Love, and unerring Wisdom, as well as awful Sovereignty : For,

1. Death cannot seize the Believer but with Leave from Heaven ; and as he lives the Charge of Providence, so he dies beloved of God. When the Lord has compleated his Designs of Grace upon him and by him ; he signs his Discharge ; and Death, how formidable soever in his Approach, is the sure Friend of the Redeemed of the Lord, the Messenger sent to bring them to their Father's House, to possess the Kingdom he has prepared for them. The Death of the Ungodly, is Part of the Wages of Sin, and brings a Curse along with it ; but blessed are the Dead who die in the Lord ; for neither Life nor Death can separate them from the Love of God which is in Christ Jesus.

God has various Ways to call home his faithful Servants ; sometimes they are snatch-  
ed

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ed away with a seeming Precipitance, when a Deluge of Evil is breaking out upon a Nation ; and now and then they may fall in a publick Calamity, sometimes in the Field, and sometimes at the Stake, some by pining Sickness and wasting Infirmities, others by sudden Disorders, least thought of and expected. But he who has fixed the Bounds of their Habitations, and appointed the Number of their Months, always, in the fittest Season, collects his Jewels, and makes their Death a Blessing to them : Nor can any Thing dissolve the Relation between the Head and the Members, their Bodies being Temples of the Holy Ghost, and allied to him, who, as the Children, partook of Flesh and Blood, himself also, in like Manner, took Part of the same, continue related to him when stretched out cold and lifeless. The Soul upon the Breach of its Union with the Body, has no anxious Cares for its former Companion ; and the very Dust of the Saints is precious in the Eyes of the Lord, so precious, that,

2. He has his Eyes ever upon it, nor will he suffer one Particle to be lost. The many Changes under which it passes, whilst subject to Corruption, and mouldering in the Grave, are all within the View, and under the Cognizance of him, who will one Day command the Sea and the Earth to give up their Dead ; and though it is as foolish as it is impious, for us to search the Tombs for

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Relicks of the Dead, as if they could be of any service in Seasons of Distress or Danger; yet we may rest assured, where-ever his *Fulness* is, it is always under his Care, nor will he lose any one Part of it: In vain then does the cruel Persecutor, or the superstitious Bigot, bring out the Bones of Martyrs, or Confessors, and express their Resentment against them by committing them to the Flames, whilst it is beyond the Power of any Creature to annihilate the least Part of Matter; and their Ashes, how distantly soever scattered, shall all be preserved as the Foundation of those glorious Bodies, which, with exquisite Skill, shall be made fit for the Service and Enjoyment of God; for,

That the Body will be raised, how ridiculous soever it might seem even to the Wiser among the Heathens, is not only highly reasonable in it self, but clearly and fully revealed in the Word of God. *Job* is very express concerning himself; *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter Day on the Earth. And though after my Skin Worms destroy this Body, yet in my Flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for my self, and mine Eyes shall behold, and not another, though my Reins be consumed within me*<sup>a</sup>. And *Daniel* speaking of those who are sleeping in the Dust of the Earth,

<sup>a</sup> Job xix. 25, 26, 27.

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says, *that many*, that is, a large Host, which no Man can reckon up, *shall awake some to everlasting Life, and some to Shame and everlasting Contempt*<sup>b</sup>. And in the New Testament, *Martha* speaks of it as what she was thoroughly persuaded of; *I know that my Brother shall arise again in the Resurrection of the last Day*<sup>c</sup>. And the Apostle is very large in explaining, as well as clear and full in asserting this Doctrine, in the 15th Chapter of the first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, from the 12th Verse to the End of the Chapter.

Sometimes this Work is ascribed to the Father; thus of him it is said, he *raises the Dead, and quickens them*<sup>d</sup>; and sometimes to the Son, who is represented as one *who shall change our vile Bodies according to his mighty Power, whereby he is able to subdue all Things to himself*<sup>e</sup>; and sometimes to the Holy Ghost; for the Apostle says, that the mortal Bodies of the Saints shall be quicken'd *by the Spirit that dwelleth in them*<sup>f</sup>: Nor is there any Inconsistency in this, since the eternal Three are one in Operation, as well as in Nature and Glory.

As to the Time when the Bodies of the Saints will be raised, we are forbid the Inquiry; since the Secret is lock'd up in the divine Mind, no Man, no, not the Angels

<sup>b</sup> Dan. xii. 2.  
<sup>c</sup> Phil. iii. 21.

<sup>e</sup> John xi. 24.  
<sup>f</sup> Rom. viii. 11.

<sup>d</sup> John v. 21.

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of God, nor the Son of Man himself, as Man, knows the Day, or Hour, as our Lord himself observes, but the Father only<sup>s</sup>; and there is a visible Reason for the Concealment of it; that we might always be upon our Watch, and waiting for his coming.

Many other Inquiries have been made as to the Place where the Resurrection shall be, and whether the same numerical and individual Body shall be raised, and whether the Resurrection shall be confined to the Saints, and the Bodies of the Wicked be annihilated, or remain in a State of Corruption; Questions not so immediately before us. Let it suffice to observe, that inasmuch as the Wicked are scoffingly saying, Where is the Promise of his Coming? That the Time is hastening on, when the Lord of Life and Glory, the great *Immanuel*, shall descend from Heaven, accompanied by Millions of Angels, and all his Saints; when the Trump of God shall sound, and the Dead come out of their Graves; and shall hear the Voice of the Son of God; and hearing they shall live, arise again, and appear before him; and whilst the Wicked shall be covered with Shame, and cloathed with Confusion, the very Bodies of the Saints shall appear bright and glorious: For in that Day,

<sup>s</sup> Mark xiii. 32.

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1. They will be perfectly free from all the Blemishes, Defects, Infirmities, or Deformities, which attend them in this World.

They will no more be subject to Sickness, Pain, Hunger, Thirst or Weariness, Inconveniencies, which often make the Saint complain whilst here: Nor is the most comely, beauteous Person on Earth, to be compared with the Redeemed of the Lord, when raised without Spot, Blemish, Wrinkle, or any such Thing; and what adds to the Consideration is, that it is a Beauty which shall not fade, but remain compleat and perfect, through the successive Ages of Eternity.

The Children of God, in common with the rest of Mankind, are sometimes exposed to the barbarous Insults of those who inhumanly make themselves merry with the natural or accidental Deformities of their Fellow-creatures; *Paul* himself speaks, *how through the Infirmity of the Flesh, he preached the Gospel to the Galatians*; and mentions it to their Honour, that the *Temptation which was in his Flesh they despised not, nor rejected*<sup>h</sup>; plainly intimating, that this had been the Case in other Places; and we find some false Teachers in the Church of *Corinth*, objected against him, that *his bodily Presence was weak, and his Speech contemptible*<sup>i</sup>; but nothing of this will be found

<sup>h</sup> Gal. iv. 13, 14.

<sup>i</sup> 2 Cor. x. 10.

with the Saint in the great Day; when it is highly reasonable to conclude, that a Perfection of Beauty will adorn him, Beauty far surpassing that of our first Parents in Paradise. Here the Body is perpetually exposed to innumerable Accidents from without, and frequently subject to many internal Disorders; a Want of Exercise endangers Health, by feeding and promoting grosser Humours; and there is no Attendance to it, without some Degree of Weariness. How much Time is spent in providing for the returning Calls of Appetite; and a little Excess in its Indulgence, is as dangerous to the Constitution as dishonourable to our Benefactor. In a Word, how much of our Time is taken up in answering those Questions, of, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be cloathed? With what Care and Application do we prop up the tottering Tabernacle; and after all we find, that in Time, it will dissolve, and must be taken down; and the most that can be said of our Life at present, is, that it is a Succession of Hunger and Thirst, Pain and Sickness, Toil and Weariness, whilst the Body is continually exposed to the Inclemency of Air and Seasons; one while pinched with cutting Cold, and presently fainting under the Weight of sultry Heat, till at length its Strength impairs, its Beauty fails, and it drops cold and uncome-



## 70 Saints compleat in Glory.

ly into the Grave. But oh! with what Transports of Joy will the Soul of the Believer meet its former Companion in the last Day! when there will be no Part wanting, nothing superfluous; when he shall be no more troubled with the Cravings of Hunger, or the Disquietude of Thirst; nor complain with *Jonah*, of the scorching Heat of the Sun; but whilst the Saviour will be shedding every Kind of Beauty upon him, all Things that surround him shall concur to compleat and perpetuate his Felicity

2. The Body of a Saint, when called out of the Grave, will be immortal and incorruptible: *It is sown in Corruption, but it is raised in Incorruption; for the Dead shall be raised incorruptible, and this Corruptible will put on Incorruption, and this Mortal Immortality<sup>k</sup>.*

A Man can hardly take any tolerable Notice of himself, but he must observe, that the Seeds of Death are found within him; nor is there a Person in the World, how distinguished soever for Health or Strength, but will sooner or later add to the Trophies of this universal Conqueror; we may say with *Job*, *to Corruption, Thou art our Father; and to the Worm, Thou art our Sister<sup>l</sup>*: God will bring each of us to Death, and to the Grave, the House appointed for

<sup>k</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 42.—52, 53.

<sup>l</sup> Job xvii. 14.

Saints compleat in Glory. 71

all living ; the Time is hastening on, when God will change our Countenances, and send us away, and the Question must be resolved into an universal Negative ; What Man is he who liveth and shall not see Death ? since it is appointed to all Men once to die, and after Death the Judgment. There may be a Difference as to Time and Circumstances ; *one dying in his full Strength, being wholly at ease and quiet : When his Breasts are full of Milk, and his Bones moistened with Marrow. Another dying in the Bitterness of his Soul, never eating with Pleasure ;* but in this they all agrée, *they lie down alike in the Dust together, and the Worms shall cover them<sup>m</sup> :* But in Heaven, as there will be no more Pain, nor Crying, so there shall be no more Death. Death is the last Enemy ; and when he is swallowed up of Victory, there will be a sufficient Foundation for the triumphant Inquiry ; *O Death, where is thy Sting ? O Grave, where is thy Victory ?* Then the Body, as well as the Soul, will be immortal ; not in the same Sense in which God is so, who only hath Immortality and eternal Life ; nor exactly in the same Manner as Angels, or even the Soul its Companion ; for the Body will still remain distinct from the Mind, and be incorruptible, not so much in it self, as though it were indivisible, and absolutely in-

<sup>m</sup> Job xxi. 23, 24, 25, 26.

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capable of all Impair or Alteration, but from the Appointment and Constitution of God, who will preserve it by his almighty Power in a State of Existence and Perfection.

It is something Shocking to us, even in our utmost Vigour and Strength, to consider that one Part of us must be reduced to Dust, and lie scattered in the Bowels of the Earth, for, perhaps, many Generations; nor can any Thing so easily conciliate our Mind to the Determination of our heavenly Father, in this Respect, as the Remembrance, that when once the Soul shall be reunited to the Body, it will be no more unclothed to the endless Ages of Eternity.

3. The Bodies of the Saints will be raised pure and holy, guiltless and accepted, without inherent Pollution or imputed Guilt.

Many and various are the Opinions of Divines about the Manner of propagating Corruption, or contracting Defilement; and, perhaps, it may be true in the most strict, abstracted, or philosophical Sense, that meer Matter is incapable of sinning; yet it is certain, it may be objectively a Temptation to it, and the Occasion of it, as well as it is frequently the Instrument, and always the Associate of the Soul in the Commission of it. It is observable therefore, that the Apostle, in the Citation he brings to confirm what he had before asserted, that *both Jews and Gen-*

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*Gentiles are all under Sin*, does not only take Notice of the Darkneſs of the Underſtanding, and the Obſtinacy of the Will; that *there is none that underſtandeth, none that ſeeketh after God*; but adds, *their Throat is an open Sepulchre; with their Tongues they have uſed Deceit; the Poiſon of Aſps is under their Lips; their Mouth is full of Curſing and Bitterneſs; their Feet are ſwift to ſhed Blood*<sup>n</sup>: And elſewhere he ſpeaks of the Members of the Body, as yielded in a State of Unregeracy, as Servants *to Uncleanneneſs and to Iniquity*<sup>o</sup>; and even after Converſion he complains, that he ſaw a Law in his Members warring againſt the Law of his Mind, and bringing him into Captivity to the Law of Sin, which made him groan out that heavy Complaint, *O wretched Man that I am! Who ſhall deliver me from the Body of this Death*<sup>p</sup>? And the Apoſtle James ſingling out the Tongue among the Members, obſerves, that where the Man is unſanctified, *it is a Fire, a World of Iniquity, that it defileth the whole Body, and ſetteth on Fire the Courſe of Nature, and is ſet on Fire of Hell; that it is an unruly Evil, full of deadly Poiſon*<sup>q</sup>: Nor have we the leaſt Reaſon to imagine, that the Soul only is intended, when the Apoſtle concludes all under Guilt. Companions and Affociates are cognizable by the

<sup>n</sup> Rom. iii. 11, 13, 14, 15.      <sup>o</sup> Chap. vi. 19.      <sup>p</sup> Chap. vii. 23, 24.      <sup>q</sup> James iii. 6, 8.

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**Law** in capital Cases ; whilst the Bond of Union remains unbroke between Soul and Body, the Law considers them as Parties, denounces the Curse against the whole Person of him who continues not in all Things written in the Book of the Law, to do them ; accordingly the Punishment of Sin is not only represented by the gnawing of a guilty Conscience, or the Worm that dieth not ; but also by the grievous Torments of the Body, in the Lake which burns with Fire and Brimstone.

There never was but one of the Sons of Men, since the first *Adam's* Apostasy, who was perfectly holy in his Nature and Conversation, harmless, and without Defilement, and separate from Sinners ; that holy Thing which was miraculously conceived and born of the Virgin, was untainted, free from the Pollution of Sin, as well as for ever secured from the Power and Dominion of it : And whereas the Redeemer, in his amazing Condescension, took the same Flesh and Blood in kind, though without the Poison of Sin which is found with his Brethren, and so the Head and the Members are of one common Nature ; so the Time is coming on when their raised Bodies shall resemble his glorious Body in Purity and Innocence, as well as in Dignity and Glory. What is said of those who have a Part in the first Resurrection, holds good of every particular

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ticular Believer, both in Body and Soul, that when he comes to Heaven, he will appear to be *blessed and holy*<sup>r</sup>: Nor can it be otherwise; for *without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord*; nothing that defiles, or is defiled, can ever enter into the new *Jerusalem*. And as there will be no Object from without, to move or excite those disorderly Passions and corrupt Inclinations, which are almost interwoven with our Nature in a State of Imperfection; so, were they present under all the Disguises and Alurements with which they appear to us in this World, the Believer being perfectly sanctified in Soul, in Spirit, and in Body, would feel no more, the least Emotion towards them, or Affection for them.

4. The Bodies of the Saints when raised, will be spiritual, active, and vigorous; not as we have before observed, that they will cease to be material, or, that they will be changed into the same Substance with the Soul; for the Body will still be a true and proper Body, having all the essential Parts and Properties of it, but for ever delivered from those more gross, heavy, and earthly Qualities which attend it whilst here: Thus the Apostle says, *It is sown a natural Body, it is raised a spiritual Body; it is sown in Weakness, it is raised in Power*<sup>s</sup>.

<sup>r</sup> Rev. xx. 6.

<sup>s</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 43, 44.

What

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What our Lord in Compassion said of his Disciples, *The Spirit is willing, but the Flesh is weak*<sup>t</sup>, is, in a Degree, true of the most active Servants in his Household ; How do the Disorders of the Body frequently indispose for the Worship of God ? What Interruptions from Weariness, Sickness, Pain, or Drowsiness ? How does the intemperate Glow of Youth, or the sickly Langour of declining Years, call off our Attention from heavenly Things ? This, no Doubt, was one Reason of the Apostle's Wish to be gone, heighten'd, perhaps, if we give into the Opinion of many, by the Weakness and Tenderness of his natural Constitution. A few Hours in the Sanctuary, when the Mind is intense, and thoroughly employ'd, will bring Weariness to the Flesh ; and if the Exercise is carried on but a little too far, what a Loss of spiritual Appetite, what a Pall upon our Relish ? But they who are in the Temple of the living God above, serve him Day and Night with renewed Vigour, and enlarged Delight ; here the animal Spirits are subject to Decay, and are quickly spent and exhausted ; but there, when Millions of Ages are run out, they will be equally ready to their Work, and pleased with their Entertainment, as the very first Moment they entered upon it ; the natural

<sup>t</sup> Matt. xxvi. 41.

Saints compleat in Glory. 77

Sun will, one Day, cease to shine ; nor will the Moon, or the Stars always give their Light ; but the Saint will never cease to love, worship and enjoy.

How far like the Body of Christ in its Ascension, at the Direction of the Soul, they may be capable of moving from one Place to another, like a Ray of Light, or the Flight of an Eagle, is not for us to determine ; but this we may depend upon, that in this, as well as in other Respects, as far as Beings compounded of Flesh and Spirit are capable, they will be like the Angels of God : Which leads me,

*Lastly*, To observe ; The Bodies of the Saints, when raised, or in raising, shall be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious Body <sup>u</sup>.

This is a Circumstance that could never have enter'd into the Heart of Man, had not God been pleased to reveal it unto us by his Spirit ; of this the Apostle speaks, when he says, *As we have born the Image of the Earthly, we shall also bear the Image of the Heavenly* <sup>\*</sup>. And the Apostle *John* does not only speak of the Privilege it self, but seems to give us some little Hint as to the Manner in which we shall be Partakers of it, when he says, *Beloved, now are we the Sons of God ; but it does not yet appear what we shall be : But we know, when he shall appear we*

<sup>u</sup> Phil. iii, 21.

<sup>\*</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 49.

*shall*



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*shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is*<sup>v</sup>: So that whilst we behold, with Wonder and Gratitude, what God hath bestowed on his Children already, that they are now taken into his Family, adopted to an Inheritance, made Heirs of himself, and Joint-Heirs with his Son; it may yet be affirmed, that it does not appear what they shall be: But this we know, that one Day they shall be like him, and be satisfied with that Likeness; and, perhaps, the Mercy may be given or enlarged in a Way of Vision, whilst the Saint looks with Amazement on the incomparable Beauty, and dazzling Lustre of his exalted Saviour, he may be changed into his Likeness, from Glory to Glory: We have it from the Lips of the Judge himself, that in that Day the Righteous shall shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father, as the Sun of Righteousness will arise and shine upon them in his full Strength and unclouded Glory for ever; so each of them, like a Star, borrowing his Splendor from this Fountain of Light, shall bear some Resemblance to him, though in all Things he is to have the Preheminence; and it is worth our Notice, that so rare and exquisite will the Beauty of the Saints be in Heaven, that it is represented as the Produce of a skilful Artist, who is to *fashion* our

<sup>v</sup> 1 John iii. 2.

Saints compleat in Glory. 79

vile Bodies like to his own glorious Body; and in this he will imploy the same Omnipotence as that by which he subdues all Things to himself.

How grand and magnificent is the Description which *Daniel* gives of the Person whom he saw in Vision; *Then I lift up mine Eyes, says he, and looked, and behold, a certain Man cloathed in Linen, whose Loins were girded with fine Gold of Uphaz; his Body also was like the Beryl, and his Face as the Appearance of Lightning, and his Eyes as Lamps of Fire, and his Arms and his Feet like in Colour to polish'd Brass, and the Voice of his Words like the Voice of a Multitude*<sup>2</sup>; and in Language equally majestic. The Apostle *John* tells us, that *in the Midst of the seven Candlesticks, he saw one like unto the Son of Man, cloathed with a Garment down to the Foot, and girt about the Paps with a golden Girdle. His Head and his Hairs were white like Wooll, as white as Snow; and his Eyes were as a Flame of Fire; and his Feet like unto fine Brass, as if they burned in a Furnace; and his Voice as the Sound of many Waters; and his Countenance as the Sun shining in its Strength*<sup>3</sup>. The Vision had the same Effect on each of these Servants of God; they fell at Christ's Feet as dead, unable to bear up under the Pressure of his effulgent Glory,

<sup>2</sup> Dan. x. 5, 6.

<sup>3</sup> Rev. i. 13, 14, 15, 16.

till

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till he laid his Hand upon them, and strengthen'd them to receive those farther Communications, which he design'd to make known to his Church by them : And thus the three favourite Disciples, who were distinguished with a View of a transfigured Jesus ; when they saw *his Face*, that it *shone as the Sun*, and *his Raiment was white as the Light*, so white, that no Fuller on Earth could white it ; they fell on their Faces and were sore afraid <sup>b</sup>.

But the Vision of the Redeemer's Face in Glory, will be attended with perfect Love, which casteth out all uneasy Fears, the Saints will cast their Crowns, indeed, at his Feet, and worship him with the utmost Reverence ; but as the King's Son beholds the Majesty of his Father, in the Day of his Coronation, with very different Sentiments from a Rebel or a Traitor ; so the Church, the Spouse of Christ, when made meet for heavenly Communion with him, will stand for ever ravished in his Presence, looking, loving, and changing into his Likeness ; as *Moses* brought down some of the bright Rays which surrounded him in the Mount to the Camp of *Israel*, and the People could not behold him till he had put on a Vail <sup>c</sup> ; so we have Reason to believe, that there would be no conversing with *Enoch* or

<sup>b</sup> Matt. xvii. 1, 2.

<sup>c</sup> Exod. xxxiv. 35.

*Elias,*

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*Elias*, so glorious are their very Bodies, were they to come down from Heaven, array'd in their bright and shining Robes, and to tabernacle among us. And let it be remember'd, that the Saints are not only to resemble Christ in that Purity and spotless Integrity which was found with him in a State of Humiliation, or be made meerly like to that Body of his, which he had on Earth, and which we must suppose to be exceedingly comely, till it was marred with Sufferings; but the Promise is, that we shall be fashion'd like unto Christ's *glorious* Body, which is at the Right-hand of God, and most highly exalted; so that we see, as the Head is without Blemish, incorruptible, holy, spiritual and glorious, so will the Members be in their Proportion; and it will add to the Mercy, that they have it from him as their Saviour, and in him as their Pattern.

How foolish then is the Conduct of the Men of Dress and Fashion, who spend more Time in their Choice of, or adjusting their Apparel, than in a Concern to be cloathed with the Robes of Immortality; cease thy Pains, mistaken Man, about that which is transitory and perishing, and be earnest with God, that thou mayst not be found uncloathed in the Day of his Son's appearing.

And if there are any so provokingly wicked, as to affront the Maker, by mocking

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his Workmanship, making the outward Blemishes, or natural Deformities of their Fellow-creatures, or Fellow-professors, the Subject of their Ridicule, whilst they have Reason to tremble, to think how they shall answer it another Day ; let the Saint, who is the Subject of their profane Banter, rest satisfied, since he has *such* a Body, at present, as his heavenly Father judges best for him ; and how much soever it may be attended with, or sown in Dishonour, it shall be raised compleat in Glory.

And are the Bodies of the Saints laid down at the Command, and secured by the Care of Christ in the Grave ! What a comforting Consideration is this to the pious Mourner ! especially when he has Reason to sorrow as one who has Hope ; perhaps a longer Continuance of a near Relation, or a dear Friend, might be very desirable, and whilst we ought to be affected with the Hand of God, and our own Loss, in their Removal, let us however leave immoderate Grief to those who have no Hope of meeting again ; we are following them as fast as the Wings of Time can carry us ; and the Promise runs, *Behold, I come quickly* ; and should not the Believer, who has his Conversation in Heaven, join the Church in saying, *Amen, even so come Lord Jesus.*

S E R-