



S E R M O N 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.*



AVING given you some Account
of Perfection, as it will be
found in the Soul and Body of
the Saints, when they have done
with Earth, and enter into
Heaven, and shall meet their
Saviour at the last Day. We proceed,

To consider it in its Relation to the Place
where they shall dwell for ever : And,

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1. The new *Jerusalem* will be large and capacious, sufficient to receive and entertain the whole Election of the Father's Grace, or all who are redeemed by the Son's Blood, and sanctified by his holy Spirit; as no one of these will be wanting in the Day when Christ makes up his Jewels; for all that the Father hath given him shall come unto him, and to them, who are enabled to hear his Voice, and come unto him, he gives eternal Life, with an Assurance that they shall never perish; so there will be Room enough for them all; *In my Father's House*, says our Lord, *are many Mansions*^a: As there will be many gather'd out of every Kindred, Tongue, and Nation, besides the Thousands that are sealed in the Tribes of *Israel*, so there will be a Mansion for every one of them; for the weak and trembling Babes, who are subject to Doubting, and prone to Unbelief; as well as for *Abraham*, who was strong in Faith, giving Glory to God, and enabled to hope against Hope: For the Poor and Distressed, the Despised and Contemned, who are rich in Faith, and precious in the Eyes of the Lord, as well as for those who have been wealthy, great and honourable in the World.

Here the Saints are scatter'd all over the Earth, here and there one, like a Diamond

^a John xiv. 2.

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in the Quarry; and if associated together, it is at best but into smaller Assemblies or Societies; nor is there any one Place of Worship sufficient to contain them all, but in Heaven every one shall have his Seat; for our Lord's Prayer runs, *Father, I will that they also*, that is, each, and every individual, who either are living, or shall be so, through all the future Ages of Time, that all those *whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, to behold my Glory* ^b.

We have no need to pursue the Inquiry, whether an Apostle, or a Martyr, may have the highest Seat, or principal Place? since the Ingagement is, that all shall be with Christ, beholding his Glory, and jointly employ'd in the Work of Praise. Thousands, yea, ten Thousand Times ten Thousand have been taken up thither already; and still we may say of the Church triumphant, as our Lord did of the Church militant; *And yet there is Room, Room* to entertain all whose Names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

2. It is represented as a Place prepared for the Saints, by infinite Wisdom, and boundless Love: *I go*, says Christ, *to prepare a Place for you*; not only as our elder Brother, to take Possession of it in our Name, and hold it for our Use; but as our

^b John xvii. 24.

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Fore-runner, to refit it for our Reception; not that we are to imagine the heavenly Palace has lost the least Degree of its Beauty and Lustre with which it was originally adorn'd, when God erected his Pavillion there from the Beginning; there is no Dust or Decay, but its high arch'd Roofs are as resplendent as in the first Moment of its Production; no Rust or Canker shall ever reach those pure Crowns of Gold which are worn by its Inhabitants; and yet may it not be very consistent with the Father's Regard for his Son, and the Son's Love to his People, that when the risen Saviour was exalted at his right Hand, he might, like Princes in the Day of their Inauguration or Investiture, scatter some new Beauties around the Place, and give out some fresh Treasures from his inexhaustible Fulness. This however is certain, our Lord would not have made Use of it as an Argument of Consolation to his sorrowing Disciples, had it been a Term without Meaning, or of which they could form no manner of Conception.

That the Saint must be prepared for Heaven, and be made meet, by the sanctifying Influences of the Holy Spirit, for his Inheritance may be easily accounted for, and will be readily acknowledged by every one who has any tolerable Acquaintance with the Purity of God, and the Plague of his own Heart; but who could ever have expected

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pected to have heard of Heaven prepared for the Saints; perhaps it may, in some Degree intend, that all shall be in Order, no Hurry or Confusion, as is usual when a Guest surprizes us at unawares, every Thing in Heaven will be ready at Hand, and thoroughly prepared. Without the least Ruffle or Discomposure in the Saint himself, or his Companions, he shall be conducted to that Place, or that Part of the Kingdom which was designed for him from before the Foundation of the World.

3. It will be a Land of Vision, eminently enlighten'd with the Glory of God, and of the Lamb.

What seems primarily to refer to the Glory of the Church in the latter Day, when the Knowledge of the Lord shall cover the Earth, as the Waters do the Seas, may, with equal Propriety, be consider'd as a Prediction of that World of Light in which the Believer, in God's Light shall see Light; then the *Sun shall be no more his Light by Day, neither for Brightness shall the Moon give Light unto him; but the Lord shall be to him an everlasting Light, and his God his Glory. His Sun shall no more go down, neither shall the Moon withdraw her self; for the Lord shall be his everlasting Light, and the Days of his Mourning shall be ended.*

^c Isa. lx. 19, 20.

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John tells us of the City which he saw in Vision, that it had no Need of the Sun, nor of the Moon to shine in it; for the Glory of the Lord did lighten it, and the Lamb is the Light thereof. And there shall be no Night there, and they need no Candle, neither Light of the Sun; for the Lord God giveth them Light^a.

It is the Observation of the wise Man, confirmed by universal Experience, that truly the Light is sweet, and a pleasant Thing it is to behold the Sun^c. And when God is giving us an Account of the Happiness reserved for his in Heaven, he says, Light is sown for the Righteous, and Gladness for the Upright of Heart^f; and was this wanting, we could form no Ideas of Joy or Pleasure; every one will own, that it is the most afflictive Providence to be deprived of Sight; but the blind Man, like *Bartimeus* of old, has the most lively Sense of his own Case, and with him is ready to cry out, with the utmost Importunity, *Lord, that I might receive my Sight.*

The melancholy Periphrasis that we have of Hell, is, that it is a Place of utter Darkness; and what a desolate, vast Wilderness would this World be without the Light, as well as the Heat of the Sun; which, though enjoy'd with great Disproportion in different

^a Rev. xxi. 23. and Chap. xxii. 5.
^f Psal. xvii. 11.

^c Eccles. xi. 7.

Places,

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Places, and always attended with a Succession of Night, gives an Opportunity to make Provision for our selves and Families, and perform the several Offices of Life: Now what Sort of Light, think you, will that be, that shall even eclipse the Sun it self; where there will be no Night, but a clear, delightful, and eternal Day?

4. It is represented as a Place of Rest, or the Believer's Home; where he will be treated as a Son at full Age.

The Sanctuary, when filled with God's Presence, is a Place of sweet Refreshment to a renewed Mind: A Day in God's Court, when he manifests his Love, is better than a Thousand elsewhere; he prefers the meanest Post, and would rather be a Door-keeper in the House of the Lord, than to possess the Tents of Sin and Iniquity. But, as the Apostle observes concerning the Church, before the Coming of our Lord, that it was like a Child in its Nonage, differing little from a Servant, and under Tutors and Governors, till the Time appointed; so it is true in a Degree of those Saints who dwell most with God, and under the Smiles of his Countenance whilst here; that they are, as it were, at School, advancing from one Class to another; and though sometimes they may say of an Ordinance, or a Duty, that it is made to them as the Gates of Heaven, and the Entrance of eternal Life; yet
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the most they enjoy whilst here, is but as the Earnest and First-Fruits of the Inheritance reserved for them; and as they are assured, for their Comfort, that there remains a Rest for them; so they will, e'er long, be taken home to their Father's House, where they will be treated with the greatest Freedom and Familiarity, as Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with Christ: And as there will be no Possibility, through Weakness or Temptation, of abusing their Patrimony, so it will be then given out in the largest Measure, and not in that sparing, gradual Way which the Wisdom of God sees best for them whilst here; and the heavenly World will have the Advantage of every other Place, as it will furnish out new Delights continually, so as that its Inhabitants shall never be weary of it; which, how soon it is the Case with the most beautiful Palaces, pleasant Parks, or well disposed Gardens, is too well known to the dissatisfied Proprietor, though not so easily conceived of by the envying Spectator; we are seldom here long pleased with a Place; in the Hurries of the City, how apt are we to wish for a Country Retreat, and as soon uneasy with the Solitude of Retirement: But, as it is said of the Blessed in Heaven, that they shall go out no more; so there will not be the least Desire, Wish, or Inclination to it found with any of them for ever,

And

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And how should this support the Saints, especially such of them who are poor in this World, under the Thoughts of their meaner Accommodations by the Way: You may not have, indeed, the gilded Roofs of Princes, nor the rich and costly Attire of the Great and Noble; there may be no Room for you at their Tables, or in their Houses, but as you have a God to go to now, his Throne to apply to in every Time of Need; so the Redeemer is gone to prepare you Mansions in your Father's House above. Who would be uneasy with the meanest Cottage, and the homely Apparel of the poorest Peasant, when he knows it is but for a Day, or Month, or Year; a little Time, at longest, and then he shall exchange it for a royal Palace and the costly Robes of Princes, if you can think of Heaven as *yours*, your Home and resting Place! How much Reason to be content with such Things as you have by the Way, since, in the End you shall enter that World of Vision, large enough to receive the whole Household of Faith! Which leads us,

To consider Perfection as it respects the Company into which the glorified Saints will be admitted, and with whom they will associate for ever.

What the Apostle observes of the Saints under the Gospel Dispensation, that they *are come unto Mount Sion, and to the City of the living*

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living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable Company of Angels, and to the general Assembly, and Church of the First-born, which are written in Heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the Spirits of just Men made perfect, and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new Covenant^h, may serve as a List, to inform us who will be their Companions in the other World; God, the Judge of all, will smile on them as reconciled in his Son, in whom he is just, whilst he is their Justifier. Jesus, the Mediator of the new Covenant, will receive and present their Praises to his Father, and communicate to them constant Supplies of Light and everlasting Joy. Besides these, there will be an innumerable Company of Angels, wise and holy, as well as happy Creatures; and the general Assembly of the First-born made up of the Spirits of just Men, until the Morning of the Resurrection, and after that Day, in their compleat Persons, who will be for ever with each other, and with the Lord.

Nothing imployes the Thoughts of a wise Man more than the Choice of a Friend, to whom he may, with Safety, impart his Secrets, and, with Freedom, unbosom his Soul; and when he is happily directed in the Determination, How does he prize the Blessing! But there is such a Variety of Cir-

^h Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24.

cumstances which must unite to render a Companion suitable; so much Treachery and Inconstancy found with human Nature, that there is always an Alloy, and some Mixture of Bitterness with the apprehended Sweets of earthly Friendship; but in Heaven the Believer may be always free, because he is ever safe: And the following Circumstances concur to evince the Perfection of Society there.

(1.) There will be an exact Agreement in Judgment, and the utmost Harmony in Affection.

The former is, perhaps impossible, whilst our Capacities, Situation and Advantages are so exceedingly different, and the latter too little attended to, even by those who profess to be Followers of the lovely and loving Jesus. It is not necessary to suppose, that the Capacity should be equal in all, or that no one of the Saints in Glory will know more than others; it is sufficient, that nothing necessary to their Duty or Happiness will be concealed from them; and that, as far as they are acquainted with divine Mysteries, they will agree in Judgment; nor will there be any more angry Debates about things almost indifferent, and of little Importance, which have generally created the most bitter Quarrels among Professors on Earth; for then they shall see Eye to Eye, and Face to Face, and know even as they also are known.

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It was our Lord's Commandment, and recommended upon new Motives, that his Followers should love one another; *As I have loved you, so ought you also to love one another; then are ye my Disciples if ye love one another*ⁱ: And the Apostle having observed, that the Saints, though many of themselves, yet are one Body in Christ, and Members one of another, exhorts, that *Love should be without Dissimulation, and that we should be kindly affectioned one towards another, with brotherly Love*^k: And to the same Purpose the Apostle *Peter* speaks of an *unfeigned Love for the Brethren*; and that *we ought to love each other with a pure Heart, fervently*^l. And, very much to the Honour of the primitive Church, we read, that the Multitude of them that believed were of one Heart, and of one Soul: but alas! How far is that divine Principle either lost, or greatly abated? witness the sad Divisions and fierce Contentions of those who are yet agreed in Things of the last Moment and Consequence, professing to worship one God, to trust in the same Redeemer, and to hope for the Guidance of the same unerring Spirit; but in the peaceful Realms of Glory there will be no Difference in Opinion, nor cooling of Affection; all will unite in the same common Work, with Hearts full of

ⁱ John xiii. 34, 35. ^k Rom. xii. 5—9, 10. ^l 1 Pet. i. 22.

Love

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Love to him that sits on the Throne, and to the Lamb ; and immovably attached to each other as bearing his Image, and being the Workmanship of his Hands.

(2.) As a Spirit of Love will run through the whole Assembly, so no one will envy or repine at the Happiness of another.

It may seem surprizing to some who are not thoroughly acquainted with human Nature, that there should be any Strife or Debate in the little Family of our Lord, made up of those who had left all to follow him, who were told of nothing, but Trouble and Persecution in this World, which of them should be accounted the greatest ; and we find, that the Ten, when they heard of the imprudent Request *James* and *John*, the Sons of *Zebedee*, with their Mother, made, that one might sit on his right Hand, and another on his left, in his Kingdom, they were moved with Indignation against the two Brethren ; nor could easily brook so much as the Thought of their Superiority or Advancement^m : And how had the Patriarch's Fondness for his Son, on *Joseph's* relating but a Dream, had not Providence interposed, been the Occasion of his falling a Sacrifice to the Envy of his Brethren. Though a good Man must be sensible when in a proper Frame, that the Gifts of Grace and Comfort are so-

^m Mark x. 35—41.

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vereignly dispensed by him who divides to every Man as he will, and that the least Degree of them is more than we can claim or deserve ; yet, how is he sometimes tempted, even before he is aware, to think it hard of God that others should so much exceed him ; and it is well if he is free from every Spark of Envy, as to the Person thus distinguished. But in Heaven every one will have a Fulness which will satisfy him ; and, next to their own Felicity, they will be pleased and delighted with that of their Companions. Angels will not envy the Saints, their being joint Heirs with Christ, and made like unto him ; nor will it give them the least Uneasiness to observe, that their Robes washed, and made white in the Blood of the Lamb, out-shine those of their own natural Purity and Innocence ; nor will the Saints find any Disquietude in the Thought, that the Powers and Capacities of the angelic Host, are more large and extensive than their own ; each shall possess his own Blessedness unenvied, uninterrupted for ever.

(3.) There will be no Objects to excite our Pity or Resentment ; which will ever be the Case whilst here, in a World of Misery, Sin and Folly.

How painful is the Solitude of a godly Parent for the Welfare of his rebellious Child ! with what Heart aking, and bleeding Anguish, does he see the approaching
Storm

Storm of divine Vengeance ready to overtake him, and the melancholy Reflection on the deplorable Circumstances of his Case, is too ready sometimes to tempt him to forget the Mercy of his own. Nor can the good Man hear the Blasphemy, Oaths and Imprecations of the Wicked, without a generous Pity and Compassion ; and if they are Proof against his Warnings and Admonitions, his Soul will mourn in secret Places for them : Thus *Lot's* righteous Soul was vexed at the filthy Conversation of the Wicked.

To this also we may add the great Variety of most pitious and compassionable Cases which continually surround us ; the Poverty of some, the Sickness of others, and the sudden Loss of Reputation, and falling from the Heights of Honour to the lowest Depths of Disgrace. Not to mention the numberless Accidents which our dearest Friends, and nearest Relatives are constantly exposed to, which justly engage the tender Sentiments of Pity and Sympathy : And if you add to this, that we either have, or think we have, frequent Cause to be angry at the Unkindness of Friends, the Disobedience of Children, the Negligence of Servants, or the Treachery of Enemies ; How different a Place must Heaven be to this World ? where all will be holy and happy ; no one Thing ever said or done, that can possibly displease or create Uneasiness ; where we shall have

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none sick or in Prison to visit, or poor to relieve, none to reprove or mourn over for ever.

(4.) There will be a delightful Intercourse maintained between Saints and Angels, and one Saint with another, attended with the utmost Pleasure and Improvement.

It is highly probable, that Angels, those Sons of the Morning, who sang together at the Creation of our World, and who are the secret Ministers of God in executing many Parts of his Providence, will lead the wondering Saint to a more clear Perception of the Displays of the divine Wisdom and Power, in spreading the Heavens as a Curtain, and laying the Foundations of the Earth; and when we shall be out of Danger of paying Worship but where it is due, they may point out the particular Instances of their Guardianship, Guidance or Assistance; whilst the Saint will be telling over the Wonders of electing and redeeming Love, and recollecting the many Dangers he escaped, the many Trials and Difficulties which attended him, how all worked together for his Good by the Way, and worked out for him a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory in the End.

And besides this, I apprehend there will be a Communion of Saints with Saints in Glory. Some, indeed, have doubted, whether Parents will know their Children, Ministers their People, Friends, who have taken

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ken sweet Counsel together, each other, in the Morning of the Resurrection: And we readily grant, that our Knowledge of, and Love to one another in Heaven, will be very different from what it is whilst here, when the principal Foundation of the one, will be our common Relation to God as our Father; and the other will be without the least Mixture of Sin and Defilement: But hence we are by no Means to conclude, that we shall be wholly ignorant of one another; nor can I think, that the commendable Satisfaction which we have in the Good of our Friends and Families at present, will be wholly lost hereafter. It is certain the Disciples knew our Lord when transfigured before them; and the Apostle speaks of the believing *Thessalonians*, as his *Hope, Joy, and Crown of Rejoicing in the Presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming*ⁿ: Nor is it improbable, that Ministers will then be told, when there will be no Danger of Pride or Vanity, how far they were made useful in the Hands of the Spirit, to the Souls of Men, whilst here. Can we think that God would deprive a religious Parent of the Joy of knowing his Children, the dear Parts of himself, to be happy as well as he, unless there was some weighty and important Reason for it; and if it should be suggested, that the Know-

ⁿ 1 Theff. ii. 19.

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ledge of the Miscarrying of some, who, as Vessels of Wrath, are shut up in Hell, might render them uneasy: It may be reply'd, That they will be more taken up with the Thoughts of God's Glory, than in any Regard to the Creature, and will then see, that it was absolutely necessary and proper, all Circumstances consider'd, that God should glorify himself in the Destruction of his Enemies; as they will join the Judge in the Sentence, though directed against those who have been near and dear to them in this World, when Assessors with him in the last Day; so they will for ever acquiesce in it, as most just, equal, and righteous: So that we may safely conclude, that they who are often speaking one to another in their holy Conferences here on Earth, will remember each other, and with Joy and Gratitude, call over their former Experiences. So that it will be sufficient to render the Society of Heaven, perfectly agreeable and eternally delightful to be in the Presence of God, near the glorious Person of the Redeemer, to be Companions for Angels, and the Spirits of just Men made perfect; this will be the Mercy of the Redeemed of the Lord.

Which is a full Proof that the Unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God: What would the Unsanctified do for suitable Company, or agreeable Conversation in that World of perfect Purity? There is no foolish

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foolish Talking, filthy Jestings, no Licentiousness or Profaneness in that City of God; so that could we suppose their Entrance into it, they could have neither Pleasure nor Employment; here the Sabbath is a Weariness, and there it will be an eternal Sabbath; here they cannot away with the Service of God, an Hour or two in a Week; whereas, in his Temple above, he is served Day and Night without Interruption, or Cessation; so that it is not more awful in the Thought than it will be certain in the Event, that unholy Souls shall be confined to an unclean Place, and be Companions for impure Spirits for ever.

And how should the Consideration of that Union in Affection, which will prevail in the whole Assembly above, fill the Saints with Shame and Confusion, that they fall so vastly short of it in this World. To betray, or give up any fundamental or precious Truth of the Gospel into the Hands of the Enemy, is not Charity, but Cowardice or Treachery. To rest easy whilst our Friends or Families entertain the most dangerous or destructive Errors, is not Love, but Cruelty, and the worst Sort of Cruelty too, as the immortal Part is concerned: Nor are we to break in upon plain, positive Institutions, or to change the goings in or out of Christ's House, in Compliance with the best,

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the wisest, and the most learned of Men ; here, if we are called to separate, we must do it as under the Eye of the King of the Church, the Lord of Conscience ; but in lesser Matters, and especially such as are not expressly revealed, our Difference of Opinion should, by no Means, be attended with an Alienation of Affection ; and if it is true, as some have asserted, that no two Christians differ about Things, so many and important as they are agreed in, How should they, laying aside all Strife, Contentions, evil Surmifings, and unbecoming Animofities, treat one another like Children of the same Father going to one Home, to dwell together for ever. Pity, great Pity, that Brethren should fall out by the Way, when they shall, they must agree in the End.

And since there will be a perpetual Converse maintained between the Blessed in Glory, why should the Saints be so shy of each other, so unwilling to communicate their Experiences to one another whilst here ? the Language of the Wicked bewrays them ; and how do they herd together in Clubs or Societies, where they may have an Opportunity, with the greater Freedom, to converse together about their beloved Iniquities ? And our daily Observation, how irksome religious Discourse is to the Ungodly,

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godly, should engage us to invite, with *David*, all that fear the Lord, to come and hear what he hath done for our Souls: Thus will you begin the Work of Heaven in your Way to it, and be more prepared for spiritual Converse with Angels and glorified Saints.

