



# S E R M O N VI.

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.*

**W**Hatever may be the Judgment of the World, it is not more true, that the Righteous is more excellent, than that he is more blessed than his ungodly Neighbour: He is not without his Troubles, and expects, through much Tribulation, to enter into the Kingdom; but his inward Pleasures, holy Peace,  
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and humble Joy, distinguish him from, and raise him above the most Prosperous of the Wicked; he has more solid Contentment, a better Relish of his Enjoyments, and a more sweet Composure of Mind than can be found with the Ungodly, tho' among the Great and Noble, who are continually harrassed with their guilty Fears, and terrible Forebodings of future Punishments. But if he has the Advantage in Time, when so many Things seem to make against him; how much more will this be the Case, when he shall appear before God in Glory; when every Faculty of the Soul shall be perfectly pure, and greatly enlarged; when his Body shall resemble the glorious Body of his exalted Head; when Heaven shall be his Home and resting Place, and Angels, with his fellow Saints, be his delightful Companions for ever? How far Perfection will attend each of these, has been, in a Measure, consider'd already. We go on,

To consider it as it relates to their Character, which, whilst on Earth, is imperfect, and at best, but mixed and compounded; for the most that can be said of them whilst here, is, that they are truly humble, serious and conscientious, though not to that Degree as they ought, or wish to be.

Through the Ignorance of some, the Malice of others, and the Envy of many, they are subject to Aspersions and Reproach; but  
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the Day is coming, when every Tongue that rises against them shall be put to silence, and condemned ; nor shall their Names be mention'd, but with the utmost Honour and Renown. Not that we are to imagine,

1. That it will be pleaded by themselves, or by others in their Behalf, in the great Day, that they were wholly innocent, and altogether guiltless, as if they had lived without Sin whilst on Earth ; for the Apostle is express, that we have all sinned, and come short of the Glory of God ; in the strictest Meaning of the Phrase, *There is none Righteous, no, not one* ; not a just Man upon Earth, who does Good and sins not : If we say we have no Sin, we deceive our selves, and the Truth is not in us. Now, in that Day in which the Secrets of all Flesh will be made manifest, the Believer will be acquitted ; not as one who has never offended, and against whom the Charge is wrongfully laid ; for it will be allowed by himself, as well as found upon Record, in the Book of Omniscience, that in many Things, he has grievously transgressed. It's observable therefore, when the Angel of the Covenant says, Take away the filthy Garments from the Church, as represented by *Joshua* the High Priest ; it supposes her being cloathed with them ; and that, from meer Grace, the Declaration is given out, *Behold, I have caused thine Iniquity to pass from thee, and I will cloath*

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*cloath thee with change of Raiment*<sup>a</sup>: So that the whole World being concluded under Guilt, in this Respect, the Mouths of the Saints, as well as Sinners, must be stopped before God.

2. Where they have been falsely accused by Satan, wicked Men, or their angry mistaken Brethren, they shall be fully and abundantly vindicated.

Satan is called, *The Accuser of the Brethren*, and is said, *to accuse them before God Day and Night*<sup>b</sup>. This he does by charging them with Hypocrisy and Disimulation, magnifying every Weakness, aggravating every Offence, and lessening and depreciating what of Good is found with them, or done by them; an Instance of this we have in the Case of *Job*, in which there is an equal Mixture of Malice and Impiety; for after God had said of him, *That he was a perfect and an upright Man, one that feared God, and eschewed Evil*: Satan insolently replies; *Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast thou not made an Hedge about him, and about his House, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed all the Works of his Hands, and his Substance is increased in the Land. But put forth thine Hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy Face*<sup>c</sup>. And after the good Man

<sup>a</sup> Zech. iii. 3, 4.    <sup>b</sup> Rev. xii. 10.    <sup>c</sup> Job i. 8, 9, 10, 11.

had

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had weathered the Storm of the most shocking Dispensations, in the Loss of his Family and Substance, with an heroick Intrepidity, and invincible Patience, he dares to move the Lord against him a second Time: *Put forth thine Hand now, and touch his Bone and his Flesh, and he will curse thee to thy Face*<sup>d</sup>. And in the fore-mentioned Representation of the Church, by *Joshua* the High Priest, Satan appears standing at the right Hand of the Angel of the Covenant to resist him; and the Phrase of, *The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the Lord who hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee*, plainly intimates, his Business there was to produce Charges, and forward Impeachments.

And the Apostle *Peter*, recommending to the Saints a proper Concern in the Strength of Christ, do maintain a good Conscience, mentions this as the Reason, that there was some *who spoke evil of them as evil Doers*, who might hereby be brought to Shame for their *false Accusations of their good Conversation in Christ*<sup>e</sup>. And our Lord tells his Followers, That as they are not of the World, the World will hate them; and that they were to look for Revilings and Persecutions; and that *all Manner of Evil would be said of them falsely for his sake*<sup>f</sup>: Nor can they well expect it should be other-

<sup>d</sup> Job ii. 5.

<sup>e</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 12.

<sup>f</sup> Mat. v. 11.

wise,

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wife, since *the Disciple is not above his Master, nor the Servant above his Lord: It is enough for the Disciple that he be as his Master, and the Servant as his Lord: If they have called the Master of the House Beelzebub, how much more shall they call those of his Household<sup>s</sup>.* Thus, How many false Stories were raised? and with how much Zeal and Diligence propagated, of the Christians, during the first ten fiery Persecutions? when they could not but be sensible, that their own Cruelty drove the Saints into secret Places, for the Celebration of religious Worship; how industriously did they charge them with Adultery, Fornication, Incest, Murder, and every other Abomination! though, in their publick Apologies, they appealed to the whole World, loudly demanding Evidence, and challenging them to produce a single Instance; yet these extravagant and ungrounded Surmises were continually pleaded, as a sufficient Excuse for all their Cruelty and Barbarity: Nor is the most holy and inoffensive Saint in the World always secure from the Lash of Tongues, set on Fire of Hell; and how common is it, that the more Strict and Pious, the more exposed to ill Will and Reproach.

Nay, what is yet more strange, Saints may, sometimes, be unjustly censured by

<sup>s</sup> Matt. x. 24, 25.

their

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their fellow Professors and Brethren in the Lord. *Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar*, the three Friends of *Job*, seemed to have been much affected with his Case, and, by solemn Appointment, met to mourn with him, and to comfort him; and, at the first View of him, so much alter'd by the Troubles of his Mind, and the Distemper of his Body, that they hardly knew him; they lift up their Voice and wept, and rent every one his Mantle, and sprinkled Dust upon their Heads towards Heaven, and sat down with him on the Ground, seven Days and seven Nights, without speaking; for they saw that his Grief was very great. But no sooner did they open, but they discovered their Mistake; *Behold*, says *Eliphaz*, *thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthen'd the weak Hands: But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled: And, with an Air of Insult and Upbraiding, he adds, Is not this thy Fear, thy Confidence, thy Hope, and the Uprightness of thy Ways? Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? or, where were the Righteous cut off? Even as I have seen, they who plow Iniquity, and sow Wickedness, reap the same. By the Blast of God they perish, and by the Breath of his Nostrils are they consumed*<sup>h</sup>. And when the good

<sup>h</sup> Job iv. 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.

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Man replied, That were his Grief thoroughly weighed, and his Calamity laid in the Balances together, it would be heavier than the Sand of the Sea; and that the Arrows of the Almighty were within him, the Poison whereof had drank up his Spirits; and gently reproves him, by observing, that *to him that is afflicted, Pity should be shewed from his Friends.* Bildad, another of his Friends, renews the Charge, that either he, or his Children, had sinned; and that if he were indeed pure and upright, God would awake for him, *and make the Habitation of Righteousness prosperous*<sup>1</sup>. And when Job had answer'd him, by acknowledging God's Justice and his own Transgressions; Zophar pursues the same Argument, and, with the utmost Severity, fastens the Charge upon him; so that he might well say, *Miserable Comforters are ye all*; and God himself declares, they had not said the Thing that was right; and puts an Honour on his Servant Job, that he is not to be appeased but by his Intercession for them.

However, let the Charge arise from what Quarter soever, from the common Enemy, his Instruments, or our mistaken Friends, where it is without Foundation, though it should not be in the Power of the Saint always to vindicate himself in this World,

<sup>1</sup> Job viii 4, 6.



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his Innocence shall appear to his own Honour, and the Confusion of his Enemies, in that Day in which the Lord will make up his Jewels, when all shall discern between him that feareth the Lord, and him that feareth him not.

3. Where they will appear to have been really guilty, and to have been justly worthy of Blame; the Merit of the Obedience, and Suffering of their Surety and Mediator, will be produced as the Foundation of their Discharge, and a sufficient Plea for their Admission to eternal Glory; for the Apostle's Challenge will be as unanswerable then, as it is now; *Who shall lay any Thing to the Charge of God's Elect? since it is God that justifies, Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again.*

So that though the Saints cannot plead Guiltless, and must acknowledge their Desert of Punishment, yet, when the Name of Christ shall appear in their Bond, then shall it be known to all, that he paid the Debt, and received a Discharge in their Name. God will appear to be just whilst they escape the Curse, and inherit the Blessing of eternal Life.

*Lastly,* When the Dead, small and great, shall stand before God, and the Books shall be opened, then will be opened the Book of Life; and, in the Hearing of Angels and Men, their Names will be read over as the  
Men

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Men whom God delights to honour ; and out of the Book of his Remembrance, all those Instances of Kindness and Liberality, Pity and Compassion, Self-Denial, Temperance and Piety, which, through the grace of God, they have at any Time been found in the Performance of in this World, shall have an honourable Mention ; for thus the Judge himself has assured us, that when he shall come in his Glory, and all the holy Angels with him, seated on his Throne, and before him all Nations, to his Friends on his right Hand he will say, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me Meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me Drink ; I was a Stranger, and ye took me in ; naked, and ye clothed me ; sick, and ye visited me : I was in Prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the Righteous answer him, Lord, When saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee ? or thirsty, and gave thee Drink ? To which he will reply ; Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my Brethren, ye have done it unto me<sup>k</sup>.*

And how should this quiet the Mind of the Believer when unjustly evil spoken of ; perhaps, after all the Pains he has warrantably been at to vindicate his Character, ma-

<sup>k</sup> Matt. xxv. 34—40.

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ny are either weak, or wicked enough to believe the malicious Falshood ; but it is his Mercy, that as God knows the Way he takes, he has his Record on high ; so the World shall, one Day, know how far they have injured him. And with what Shame will the Wicked appear before their Judge, when he comes with ten Thousand of his Saints to execute Judgment upon all, to convince them of all their ungodly Deeds which they have ungodlily committed, and of all their hard Speeches which ungodly Sinners have spoke against him or his People ; How will they be ashamed at the Sight of those whom they once treated as the Off-scouring of all Things, when cloathed with shining Robes of Glory, every one wearing his Crown, and holding his Palm ; whilst the Curse goes out against themselves, and their Doom is sealed for ever ?

And this should teach the Saints themselves, to be as favourable in their Censures, as a due Regard to God's Honour, and the Good of his Interest will admit of ; and let us take Heed how, at any Time, from particular Instances of Conduct, we rashly determine the State of any one, a Province altogether foreign from us, reserved in the Hands of the great Sovereign, and in which we are so liable to mistake. I doubt not, but if Blushing were possible in Heaven, it would be found with some of those who have been  
guilty,

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guilty, in this Respect, on Earth, upon their meeting with some of their backsliding Brethren, for whom they had no Charity whilst here. Which leads us

To consider Perfection, as it respects the Imployment of the Saints in Glory. And,

(1.) It will be the most noble and honourable, the most worthy of God, and best suited to the rational and renewed Part, consisting chiefly in Contemplation, Conference, Adoration and Praise.

The Works of God bespeak their great Original, as they exhibit to us Notices of his Wisdom, Power and Godhead; and the more abundantly they discover the Perfection of their great Creator, the more worthy of our Contemplation; *David* was well imploy'd, when, as a religious Philosopher, he was considering the heavenly Bodies in their Nature, Order, and Use; and cried out, *Lord, What is Man, that thou art mindful of him*<sup>m</sup>? But the Apostle had the Advantage of him, when, surveying the Mysteries of sovereign Grace, and distinguishing Mercy, he breaks out, *O the Depth of the Riches both of the Wisdom and the Knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways are past finding out! For who hath known the Mind of the Lord, or who hath been his Counsellor? Or who hath first given*

<sup>m</sup> Psal. viii. 4.

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*to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all Things*<sup>n</sup>. But in this Respect it may be said, as our Lord observed upon the Character which he had given of *John the Baptist*, that he that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven, was greater than he. Our Work here, at best, is mixed; we have our civil and social Concernments; Food and Raiment, and a Supply for our Families, is to be obtained by a Blessing of God on our Industry; so that we are divided between a Variety of Employments, and attended with frequent Avocations from serious Thoughts, and spiritual Meditations. But as the Body shall be so far spiritual, as to hunger and thirst no more; so there will be nothing to call off our Minds from holy Meditation.

Nor will our Discourse be about mean, vain, trifling, or sinful Things, but such as will become the Sons of God, and worthy the Attention of Angels themselves: And whilst the Soul, with unknown Pleasures to it self, shall be thus imploy'd, every new Idea will create fresh Wonder, increase its Flame of Love, and inlarge its Occasion of Praise: Now what Work can a rational, holy Creature be conceived to be engaged in, so worthy of God, and glorious to himself, as to be looking into the Counsels of his Will,

<sup>n</sup> Rom. xi. 33, 34, 35, 36.

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the Secrets of his Providence, the Heights and Depths of his Love ; and whilst looking, loving ; and whilst loving, adoring.

(2.) This their Employment will be without Pain or Weariness, without Interruption or End.

When a Christian is in a proper Frame of Spirit, though call'd out to hard and difficult Service ; it cannot be said of him, that he is weary of his Work ; but the most Vigorous and Active, Strong and Healthy, have had, sometimes, Reason to complain that they are weary in it, or by it : Nor can the Mind be long kept on the Stretch without some Degree of Pain ; nor would it suit our Health, any more than be agreeable to our Inclinations, to be always engaged in one Way ; and it's a melancholy Truth, that, with too much Difficulty or Reluctance, we are employ'd about the best Things. But in Heaven the Mind will be fitted everlastingly to meditate ; and when meditating, to feed on holy and spiritual Subjects ; nor will there be any Thing to break in upon, or interrupt us for ever : But if ever we reach the Temple of God, we shall serve him Day and Night in it ; singing the Songs of *Moses* and of the Lamb, throughout the unknown Ages of Eternity.

*Lastly*, The Believer will be as happy in his Entertainment, as honourable in his Work. For,

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[1.] It will be full, nothing wanting that is necessary to make up, or compleat his Felicity.

*I am thy Shield,* says God to *Abraham,* and *thy exceeding great Reward:* As Children, the Saints are Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with Christ; and is there any Thing that the Heart can conceive to be wanting, when God himself, the rich and inexhaustible Fountain of all Blessedness, is their Portion and Inheritance; when he, who can make them as happy as he will, will make them as blessed as they will wish to be. It is not a Throne, Crown, or Kingdom only, that God has promised his People, but himself; and what can he give them more? Father, Son and Spirit will hold a most intimate and everlasting Communion with them; the Apostle desired no more than to be with Christ; for he knew that he was at God's right Hand, where there is Fulness of Joy, and where there are Pleasures for evermore; here the Saint sometimes sweetly tastes the Streams of that River which makes glad the City of God, and they dare not be unthankful for the Mercy; since the least of Heaven is a glorious Favour to them who have deserved the Miseries of Hell: But when admitted to the most intimate Injoyment of Fellowship with the Father and the Son, it is yet but in Part, and not to be compared with what they hope for  
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in Glory. Sometimes Christ unveils his Face, and, e'er they are aware, their Hearts are like the Chariots of a willing People; but how strong is the Expression concerning the better World? *Well done good and faithful Servant, enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord*; here it enters into us as small Streams from the Fountain; there we shall enter into it as a fathomless Ocean of Delight.

[2.] Our Appetite for, and Relish of it, will be as lasting as the Blessing it self.

Christ represents himself as the Bread of Life, the heavenly Manna, of which, who-soever eateth spiritually, shall never die; nor shall he evermore thirst after sensual, worldly Advantages, in the Manner, or to the Degree he did before his eating of this spiritual Food. This, as hard a Saying as it was to the *Jews*, contained in it no more than a familiar Representation of the Necessity of a spiritual Communion with him, in whom it has pleased the Father that all Fulness should dwell, that from his Fulness we might receive, and Grace for Grace; but we have this Advantage by the Manner of the Relation, that we hence naturally collect, that Believers in him, shall live; that is, be happy to Eternity; that he will be the Medium of conveying and continuing this Life to them, and that they will ever feed with Pleasure and Delight upon him; nor will there be the least Danger of  
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their being cloy'd with this heavenly Food, or satiated with this delightful Entertainment; for the Pleasure of Fruition will constantly attend the Succession of Injoyment. What the *Jews* tell us of the material Manna, which miraculously was rained down from Heaven about their Tents, that it suited every Appetite, and pleased every Taste, may, without Danger of exceeding, be affirmed of the Pleasures at God's right Hand; which, as they will be many and various, so they will be everlastingly agreeable; represented by *a pure River of Water, clear as Chrystal, proceeding out of the Throne of God, and the Lamb; and by a Tree of Life, which bears twelve Manner of Fruits, and yields her Fruit every Month*<sup>o</sup>: -And this is intended by our Lord, when he says, *I appoint you a Kingdom, that ye may eat and drink at my Table in my Kingdom, as well as sit on Thrones, judging the twelve Tribes of Israel*<sup>p</sup>.

And as their Relish will be maintained, so the Blessing will be eternal; hence called everlasting Life, an incorruptible Crown, an eternal Weight of Glory, and an Inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away; so that if they possess as much as they can desire, with constant Pleasure, and uninterrupted Delight, and

<sup>o</sup> Rev. xxii. 1, 2.

<sup>p</sup> Luke xxii. 30.

this

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this to continue for ever ; What can be added to the Account, or give us a more compleat View of the Perfection of their Felicity ? After all, it must be confessed, Experience will make us the best Judges of Heaven.

And now, if we should consider the Words as they may be applied to a Sinner, of whom, in a Sense, it is true, *When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away* ; they may teach us, that whatever he has met with of Pain, Trouble and Sorrow here, is but in Part, and only an Introduction to what awaits him hereafter ; if he has a few good Things in this Life, being abused by his Lusts, he shall have many more and bitter evil Things, when he is tormented in the other World ; whether he drops into the Grave unobserv'd, or attended with the costly Pomp of a magnificent Funeral, the Soul finds it self in the infernal Pit, without Servants or Retinue, Friend or Comforter ; and if it is enlarged, as some conceive it will be, it is that it may be susceptible of more Pain and Misery ; nor will it receive the least Satisfaction by its Re-union with the Body, in the Resurrection Day ; but a large Increase of Torment and Disgrace ; the Place of their everlasting Abode, no other than that *Tophet* ordain'd of old, for the Workers of Iniquity ; the Smoke of which bottomless Pit will

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will ascend before God Day and Night, forever; his Companions in Misery, infernal Spirits, and the Wicked, Impenitent and Unbelieving from among the Children of Men. When his Name shall be called over in the great Day, he will remain speechless, having nothing to offer in his own Favour, and covered with Confusion, hear the dreadful Sentence denounced, Depart from me thou cursed: His Work will be weeping and wailing, and gnashing of Teeth, attended with the most cutting Reflection on himself, and Blasphemies against his Judge; and his Portion be the unmix'd Wrath of a Sin avenging God, who, with relentless Fury, will tear him in Pieces, whilst there shall be none to deliver.

Upon the Whole, we may observe,

1<sup>st</sup>. How unwise are Sinners, what Enemies to themselves, in preferring the short liv'd Pleasures, perishing Profits, and uncertain Honours of this World, to that Treasure, *which neither Moth can corrupt, nor Thieves break through and steal*: One would be almost tempted to think, from the Conduct of many, that they never so much as heard of Heaven, by the Hearing of the Ears; or that they concluded it was designed for others, whilst themselves were to continue always here: If our Lord's Rule is to determine the Case, How few have Treasure in Heaven! since the most are visibly bowing  
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down to the Mammon of this World as their Idol, spend their Time and Thoughts, waste their Strength, and consume their Health, in obtaining what they must quickly part with; What anxious Concern to preserve their Acquisitions, and how loud and bitter their Complaints on the Loss of them? And is this consistent with a thorough and steady Persuasion, that they are only Sojourners here on Earth, hastening to his Bar; who has said, Seek first the Kingdom of God, and the Righteousness thereof; when it has been the very last Thing in their Thoughts, and, as a Thing of small Importance, or no Account, put off to the Decline of Life. It must be granted, that Things temporal have the Advantage of being visible and present with us, and near at hand; but Experience may teach us, that as present as they appear to be, we are far enough from Satisfaction in the Possession of them: At best, they are designed but as Helps and Accommodations by the Way; nor can they, when united, make up a proper Portion; so that we may conclude with our Lord, that if a Man gained the whole World, and loses his own Soul, the Consequence must be dreadful to himself; since the Riches of ten Thousand Worlds would not redeem that Soul from Ruin and Destruction.

2<sup>dly</sup>. Let

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2<sup>dly</sup>. Let us not look for absolute Perfection in others, and beg of God that we may advance as near to it as possible our selves. The best of Men are but Men, Men of like Passions, surrounded by the same Temptations, apt to mistake in Judgment, or to be irresolute and wavering in Designs ever so well concerted ; frequently surprized with unthought of, unforeseen Accidents, and engaged and diverted by new and different Objects ; so that if we look for absolute Perfection in a Father, a Friend, a Child, or Fellow-professor, we must wait till we come to Heaven for it ; and whilst this should lessen our Resentment, and abate our Indignation against those who may act either a weak or unbecoming Part towards us : Let us never give over beseeching the Throne of Grace, that we may make continual Advances, and nearer Approaches towards that Perfection which will be the crowning Blessing of Immortality.

3<sup>dly</sup>. What more powerful Motive to excite our Zeal for God, and engage us to lay out our Time, Talents and Strength, in his Service, than the Consideration of this glorious Recompence of Reward : He that lives in a believing Expectation to receive so much from God, in the End, will hardly be tempted to grudge him any Thing by the Way. And let this be an Answer to every  
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Temptation, How shall I do this and offend that God whom I hope to enjoy for ever; and, when ready to be weary and faint in our Minds, let us think of the Prize before us; and, by a patient Continuance in well doing, be seeking for Glory, Honour, Immortality, and eternal Life.

