

the assured Expectation of this, make you reckon the Day of your Death, far better than that wherein you were born. And let such thoughts as these, *I am hastning to the Time and State wherein I shall sin no more, never be troubled with one Temptation more, when I shall be compleat in Christ, and filled with his Fullness, and enabled, to love, admire, praise and delight in him for ever, without Interruption or Weariness,* make you cheerfully look out for the approach of that Change which will introduce you into this so longed for Felicity.

[DECEMBER 19. 1699.]

SERMON CXL.

2. **T**HE Soul being thus *perfected in Holiness, passeth into Glory.* It is necessary that Holiness in them be thus compleated in order to that passage. And that whether we consider the Glory which they pass over into, do refer to a State, Place, Entertainment, or Employment; all of which are included in it: and in neither whereof can we be intirely happy, till we are indefectively holy. The very Nature of the Blessedness which God confers on his Children infers this. Our wretchedness therefore so long abides as there abides any thing of the body of Death with us. But now the Soul, being immaculate, enters upon its Glory. Which, what it is, who can tell, but one that hath been in the possession of it? Or who could entertain it, while clogged with the remains of Sin? *Paul* once had an admirable prospect of it, but he could not tell how, nor could he declare what it was, though it made admirable impressions on his heart, *2 Cor. 12. begin.* However the reports that are made of it in the Word of God are surprizing. And that may be peculiarly applied to this, *Psal. 87. 3. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah.* Let us then make a few Remarks upon it, under the Four forecited Heads, in which we may have a relishing taste of the future Happiness of the Souls of Believers, when they are past out of the Body.

1. **TH**is Soul enters into a Glorious State. Glory is often taken for a state transcendently excellent: Such is the Condition the Soul now arrives at. And in this two Things are considerable, viz.

1. *IT is set at liberty from those evil things which incommoded it in this Life.* There were such things here which clogged it, & alloyed its felicity, which are now removed from it, or rather it from them. And these of Four sorts,

(1.) *ALL that impeded it in its Operations, when in the Body now cease.* The Body was made to be the Souls Organ in performing its Operations, for which reason it was much tied up to the quality of its Instrument. The Body was at the first excellently suited for this

this Service, but the Apostacy hath put it out of tune, and every string of it now jars. The Body is so indisposed for the Souls performing its imperate acts by it, that it can do nothing that it should or would. And, tho' it be Sanctified in part, yet it hath much of Death abiding on it, which makes the Soul drive heavily in all spiritual Service. An heavy, drowsy, lumpish Body, moves slowly: And the very constitution of the Body, & disposition of the Organs of it, and Spirits in it, blind the Understanding, indispose the Will, distemper the Affections: And the many Accidents it is liable to, unfit it for Service; and while it is so, what poor work must it make? But now all these Fetters are knock'd off, and it enjoys full freedom for its own Operations: And because Sin had turned its House into a Prison, it is part of its present happiness to be enlarged.

(2.) *ALL that it suffered by sympathy with the Body is now at an end.* The Body was its own, and it had a tenderness for it. If a finger did but ache, it was affected with it. All the miseries of this Life touched it: The cares and sollicitudes for Life and Bodily support, the labour and travail he was put to; the hunger, thirst, nakedness, and distress, he encountered; the infirmities he laboured of; were not a light burthen and vexation to the Soul. This also now it is discharged from; these Tears are all wiped away. It hath commended its Body to Christ's care and keeping, and is no more careful for it.

(3.) *IT hath now done with Sinning.* This belongs to its perfection in Holiness; where we observed it. But we are to observe that this very thing belongs to its state of Glory. Hither we may refer that, Rom. 6. 7. *For he that is dead, is freed from sin.* A sinless state is a Glorified estate. It was its greatest misery here, and therefore this must be an happy privilege then. And that which enhaunceth this is, that not only shall all inclinations to Sin cease, but it shall be out of the reach of all temptations to it. None shall be offered to it from without, nor will there be any more danger of being overcome by them, if they were offered.

(4.) *IT shall no more forever be molested with Evil Men, and Sorrowful Things that it met with in this Life.* David complains, Psal. 120. 5, 6. *Wo is me, that I sojourn in Mesecb, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar. My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace.* And hence witheth, Psal. 55. 6, 7. *And I said, O that I had wings like a dove; for then would I fly away, and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander afar off, and remain in the wilderness. Selah.* No more shall he be persecuted with the Tongues and Hands of them that hate him; Yalse Friends, and open Enemies shall molest him no more: his righteous Soul shall be vexed no more with the evil Conversation of the Ungodly; nor shall it any more cry out by reason of Murderers. Nor shall it any longer be griev'd at the doleful Changes that imbitter it in

this World; mourning for the publick Calamities that here troubled it, shall be at an end. *Jeremiah* hath done with that Eligiack strain, *Jer. 4. 19.* The wicked Lives, and tragical Deaths of dearest Friends, and Relations, shall no more affect it: All these Labours it shall perfectly rest from. It was therefore one part of the blessedness promised to Godly *Josiah* consequent upon his being gathered to his Fathers in peace, 2 Chron. 34. 28. *Behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place, and upon the inhabitants of the same.*

2. *IT is filled with all those Glories which abundantly satisfy it.* Its Happiness is not only Negative, but Positive too. Its Condition shall give it the most enlarged Content. This in sum comprehends two Things in it.

(1.) *IT shall be advanced to the possession of all the Good that was secured to it in the Promise; and that is Glory Incomprehensible.* The Promises are great and precious, and the performance of them shall exceed the report it had of them here. It shall pass from faith to sight, from hope to enjoyment; from slips and tastes, and earnestts, to the whole Inheritance. And if the Apostle could say of the beginnings enjoyed here, 1 Cor. 2. 9. *But it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* What then shall it be, when it comes to that, Psal. 16. 11. *Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*

(2.) *IT shall be forever delighted in that Possession.* Its desires shall be filled, all its hopes shall be answered, it shall be made suitable to all those Beatitudes, that are prepared for its Entertainment. Could *David* say of the Sanctuary Priviledges, Psal. 63. 5. *My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow & fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips.* What will these be? But the Positive Felicity of this state, will be further Illustrated in the Things that follow.

2. *THE Soul shall enter into a Glorious Place, to dwell in for ever.* And there is unexpressible Glory contained in its passing over to this Place, and entrance into it. Here two things,

(1.) *THE Soul shall have a Glorious Convoy, to transport it to the place of its endless abode.* It shall be honourably and safely Guarded thither by the Holy Angels. We read in Luk. 16. 22. *And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the Angels into Abraham's bosom.* Which, tho' it be a Parable, yet the proper scope and design of it, is to give us to understand the different state of the Souls of Men in another Life. As it is the happiness of Believers to have the Ministry of the blessed Angels in this Life, they shall be herein also happy, in having their Souls conducted by these to their Everlasting Habitations. There is a vast distance between this Earth, where the Soul was lately conversing in its Body, and

and that Heaven to which it is to remove: It is called the highest Heaven. It is far above the Starry Region. The Soul must pass thro' this medium to its place of Abode. This passage lies in a great part through the Air, which is called the Devils Kingdom; and the Soul never went that way before. How happy an advantage then is it, to have this Royal Convoy granted it? God hereby puts a great honour on his Children, who were despised in this World, by affording them such noble Attendants, and witnesseth his great love, care, and respect which he hath for them. There is compleat safety in it; they can neither miss the way, nor suffer danger in it by affronts from their deadly Enemies. And it cannot but be inexpressibly delightful, to go home in such precious Company; and what pleasant & ravishing Communion they shall have in the way, we can but guess.

2. *THE Heaven, to which it now goes, is a Glorious Place.* There have been great Differences about the Place to which the Souls of God's Children go when they die. But the Word of God may satisfy us, that they remove from the Body to the Third Heaven. Nothing else can be intended by the *Paradise*, Luk. 23. 43. 2 Cor. 12. 8. And by *Abraham's Bosom*, Luk. 16. 22. Hence plainly opposed to Hell, ver. 23. The Soul goes to be with Christ, Phil. 1. 23. and that is, to Heaven. Compare, *Mat. 3. 21.* As for those who interpret these, and like Scriptures, of a State, and not of a Place, they mistake the nature of Souls: And the scruples about the Souls of such as died before Christ's Ascension; are nice and needless; for, as they were saved by the vertue of his Merits, accepted in the Everlasting Covenant, so their Souls went to Heaven on the same account. And how unspeakably will this contribute to the Souls Felicity, since it is a Place so Glorious in it self, and was made on purpose for the most satisfying Entertainment of those that shall be made the Inhabitants of it. All the commendations that are given of that Place in the Word of God, are evidences, that they must needs be transcendently happy who shall come to dwell there. It is a Place of Delights in it self, it was prepared for them from the foundation of the World, on purpose to discover what good-will God had for his Chosen in Christ. Hither then they shall be brought, and here they shall be lodged. Here they had no continuing City, but they looked for one, and now they are arrived at it. And it must needs be Glorious from the commendations given of it, 2 Cor. 5. 1. *For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* Heb. 11. 10. *For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

3. *THE Souls Entertainment in this Place shall be very Glorious.* As the Place it self is exceedingly Accommodated for the Souls Eternal Felicity, so every thing that it meets

with there, shall be excellently suited to the happying of it. *Paul*, who had been there in a rapture, could not utter these things, 2 Cor. 12. 4. How little then can we tell of it, who have had but some remote reports about it? But certainly, their Entertainment there will be compleatly happying. And there are Four Things wherein this more especially consists,

1. *THE Reception which they shall have in Heaven on their first Arrival, which will be very Glorious.* How happy will the Soul then find it felt to be, when those Noble Angels shall bring it into the Presence Chamber, into the Holy Court, and present it to the Lord Jesus Christ, its Redeemer. When he shall with widened Arms receive it, and with the most tender Embraces, lodge it in his Bosom, and thereby give it the feeling Assurances of His Everlasting Love. When Heaven, which before rejoiced at his Conversion, shall be made to ring with Acclamations of Joy, upon his Entrance into it; and give signal Testimonies how glad they are that their Company is increased, and a new Guest is removed from the Church Militant to the Church Triumphant. When the Lord Jesus Christ shall bring him to that stately Mansion which he had prepared for him, and make all the Glories of that blessed Place to rest upon him.

2. *THE Communion they shall be entertained with, will also be very Glorious.* Man is made a sociable Creature. The Communion therefore which he shall have in Heaven; will abundantly contribute to his Felicity: In two respects,

(1.) *THE Company it self which they shall forever enjoy, is Glorious.* He therefore who is made one of that blessed Society, & enjoys freedom and commerce with them, must need be happy in it. We have an account of this, Heb. 12. 22, 23, 24. *But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly & 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, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.* And every one of these is Glorious. There is God, in whose Favour is Life, one Smile of whose Countenance is enough to fill the Soul with extasy. There is Jesus Christ the Mediator, He who purchased it with his Blood. And if a sight of him by Faith be so Transporting, 1 Per. 1. 8. What will it be to dwell in his Presence, and sit down on his Throne with him for ever? And there are all the Blessed Angels, that innumerable Company, whose Love to God's Chosen is very great, and whose Society will be honourable and suitable to the Spiritual Nature of the Soul. And there are all the blessed Souls that went before it, who will delight in its access to them. And being purged from all the dregs of sinful imperfection that here attended them,

them, which often obstructed their Communion on Earth; and made perfect in Holiness, shall lay aside all their jealousies and animosities, and with one heart love one another intirely, and joy with the most entire unity in the Heavenly Comfort. Here is all Good Company, and such as the Soul now perfected in Holiness is only suited for, and in whom it shall take the greatest delight; such as he longed for when on Earth, and was best pleased when he could get a little imperfect Communion with in this World.

(2.) *THE manner of the Souls Communion there shall be greatly Happiness.* There was a Communion which they had with these in this Life, which they took much content in, but it was more remote, and at a distance, and much alloyed: But now it will be close and intimate. It was much interrupted by many sinful imperfections, and unhappy diversions, but now it will be incessant, nor shall any thing obscure it. It was more mediate, and through dark glasses; but now it will be immediate, and face to face. It was in lowest degrees, but now it will be in the highest degree the Soul is capable of. It is now entertained by Christ as his Spouse, the Marriage compleated; it is with him at his own home, in his Palace, and filled with his Company. God the Father receives it, with the most enlarged expressions of his Divine Love to it. Angels and glorified Souls are its most intimate Companions, and they live and converse together in Glory for ever.

3. *THE Discoveries which shall then be made unto the Soul, will be Glorious and Happiness.* Man's Soul is of an intellectual Nature, and its Happiness is suited to a rational Being. The Beatifical Vision is therefore much used in the Word of God to set forth its future Blessedness, 1 Joh. 3.2. *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is.* 1 Cor. 13.12. *For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part, but then shall I know even as I am known.* As the light of the mind was here but dim, so the medium was comparatively obscure; so that the Vision was Aenigmatical: And yet there are some Souls that can tell us, what glorious Raptures they have been transported into by these sights, when Christ took them into his Chambers, and spread over them his banner of Love; when his left Hand was under their Head, and his right Hand embraced them. What will it be then, when their sight shall be clear and perfect, & they shall see him as he is? These Visions of Glory cannot be clothed with humane language, or made intelligible to us while we dwell in houses of Clay. To see God in the full displays of all his communicable Glory, to see Christ sitting on his exalted Throne, invested with his Mediatorial Honour and Dignity; to dwell in God's Light, and in it to be irradiated with all the radiant beams of desirable

knowledge; to discern the wonderful Love of God to us from Eternity, to read the Mysteries of Providence, and all the passages of Infinite Wisdom, in that wonderful way in which he conducted us, and contemplate all the Excellencies of the Heavenly Kingdom, will certainly satisfy the Soul, and fill it with over-running Glory.

4. *THE Fruitions also which it shall then be made to enjoy, are Glorious.* Here he lived upon Promises, and would not have exchanged that Life with all the World. That which he before believed, and by Faith had the substance of, he now is actually invested with, and he hath the things themselves. The Will was made for Goodness; and when it comes to have an intire closure with that which is every way compleat, it is then consummated in its Blessedness. The Soul now goes to enter upon its Inheritance, and enjoy it all; it receives all that Christ purchased for it, and lives upon the Eternal Incomes of it. Jesus Christ sets it down upon the Throne made ready for it, puts the Crown upon it; and now it lives at the Fountain: God in Christ is its everlasting Portion. It is filled with the fulness of Joy which is in his Presence, and the Everlasting Pleasures that are at his Right Hand. Its desires, and longings are compleatly answered. And what is this less than perfect Happiness?

4. *THE Souls Employments also here are most Happiness.* As there is an objective, so a formal happiness of the reasonable Creature, and that consists in Eupraxia, or such an Employment as is suitable to it. Actual Happiness therefore consists in the closure of the Faculty with its Object. Man's Soul cannot rest without being employed in such actions as are happiness. All the business of the State and Place is Glorious, and the perfect freedom of the Soul in it must needs render it blessed: And besides what the Body will be concerned in another Day, there are some purely Spiritual, which belong hither: More especially Three,

1. *IT shall be filled with Divine Contemplations.* By these shall the glorified Understanding be employed. It shall unweariedly gaze upon such delightful Objects as shall fill it with Raptures; viz. the Glorious Perfections of God, as his own Portion, which will supply him with Eternal matter of fresh Speculation, which will make them ever new. The great Mysteries of the Trinity, the Hypostatical Union of the Two Natures in the Person of the Son of God, the Mystical Union of Believers to Christ; all the Series of Providence, the curious Contrivances in bringing about the Divine Purposes, and defeating the Policies of Hell; all the new manifestations of himself which God shall make to them, will be surprizing, and make them to say, *it is good being here.* Thus will they be ever *Drinking of the Rivers of Pleasures.*

2. *IT shall always exercise perfectest Love, and Joy.* The Soul it self is not without such Powers

Powers in it. These are therefore ascribed to the Angels; because they have something Analogous to them. Desire and Hope shall now be satisfied, and Fruition shall put an end to the exercise of them. True, there are some things about which these shall be employed, as the Resurrection of the Body, and the Happiness of it; but the things enjoyed are perfect, and being enjoyed, are no longer expected. Love will be Eternally embracing God in Christ, and following it self in its blessed Fruitions. And these shall make it to rejoyce with Joy unspeakable; and this shall continue for ever. *Isai. 35. ult. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads, they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*

3. *It shall forever Celebrate the Glory of God in Christ.* Though it hath no Tongue at present to employ in Praising him, yet, as the Angels are presented crying, *Holy, &c. Isai. 6. 3.* so there is a way in which Glorified Souls can express themselves in highest Devotions to God & Christ, who loved, and redeemed them. They have nothing now to Pray for, but the Resurrection and Last Judgment, in respect to themselves: And so they are occupied in Praises; in which they unweariedly make New Songs to set forth the Glory of God, and their own Happiness in the enjoyment of him. And when the Soul is totally engaged in this, it now perfectly attains its last end, and in so doing cannot but be intirely happy. But alas, how small a portion of these things do we know?

U s e. *LET the Children of God then Comfort themselves in their Priviledge with these Thoughts.* You at present labour under many Discouragements: Bodily Infirmities clogg you, a Body of Death pesters you; the dark Days of God's hiding of his Face disquiet you: the weight that oppres your Souls, make you to cry out; the molestation of wicked Men, and the unhandfome carriage of the Godly, not a little molest you. Now refresh your selves with this. This imprisoned Soul, will ere long get its Liberty; then I shall know Sin no more, then all Sorrows will be at an end, then the Wicked will cease from troubling me, and the Godly will no more be angry at me: Then I shall see and enjoy God, and never lose sight of him more; then I shall Confort with perfect Saints and Angels. Let this solace you in all your toil and trouble, to think I am making haste to leave a wretched World, and enjoy the end of my Faith, the Salvation of my Soul.

[JANUARY 16. 1699.]

SERMON CXXI.

WE have followed the Departing Soul of the Believer, from its Earthly Tabernacle to its Heavenly Habitation, and left