



SERMON CXLVI.

III. **WE** proceed to the third and last Article of the consummate Happiness of Believers, in which we are given to understand, how it shall fare with them, after the great Judgment is past, viz. *They shall be perfectly blessed, in full Enjoying, &c.* All the former Steps of their Blessedness, though perfect in their kind, were yet leading to this; and here is the compleat and total Consummation of all. And here are two things, in the Consideration whereof, we may make some shallow Guess at their great Felicity then; viz. their happy Return with Christ to the place of Glory; and their everlasting Abode with him in that Place, in the full Fruition of the Glories of it.

1. *BELIEVERS will be wonderfully happy in their Return with Christ to the place of Glory.* This shall be as soon as the great Judgment is over, and all the Affairs of that Day, are fully determined. Christ after his Resurrection ascended to the highest Heavens, & took Possession of it, as his Royal Palace. Now the Man Christ leaves that Place for a Season, in pursuit of the great Judgment; for we are assured, that he will come down into this lower World, and erect a Tribunal here, for the management of that Business. How much Time will be taken up, in the transacting of that great Affair, is not for us to conjecture, nor is it material for us to know. But when all rational Beings are tried, and disposed of according to the Rules of that Judgment, there will be no more for him to do here, he will therefore return again to Heaven, and all his Saints & Angels shall go in Company with him. And how glorious a Process will this be? As he brought a Retinue of Angels from Heaven with him, and his Redeemed met him in the Air, and filled up his Train; so he will return in like State, and take them along with him, for they are *to be with him*, Job, 17. 24. Heaven is the Place of Rest; that is the Fathers House, where the many Man-

sons are prepared for them. And there is a special Glory which shall be given to them, in this very return. Which more especially appears in three Particulars.

1. *THESE Redeemed of Christ, shall return with him in the state of his Spouse, going Home with him to his Kingdom.* This will be the Consummation of the great Marriage of the Lamb, the Espousals whereof, were plighted in this World. The Day of their Conversion, was the Day of their Espousals, and they had rarried for him, and waited for the completing of their Communion with him, till they came to Glory, and that both of Soul and Body, and that is not till now. And for this reason are they here often putting up that request, Cant. 8. 14. *Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of spices.* Then will it be a glorious thing to see the Bride, the Lambs Wife, in all her stately Ornaments, going Home with her Lord.

2. *BELIEVERS will have a greater Honour put upon them in this Return, than the angels themselves.* Tho' Man was made a little below them in his Creation, yet here will be a peculiar Dignity put upon Men, in this Solemnity. The Angels will then appear in their Glory, but they shall be the Friends of the Bridegroom, and Attendants on the Bride; and therefore not so near to the Lord Jesus Christ, as his Redeemed shall be. Ye, it will be one part of their execution of their Office, as Ministering Spirits for these heirs of Salvation, as they are said to be, Heb. 1. 14. And they will count themselves happy in being thus honoured by Christ. How wonderful then will the Believers Condition be?

3. *THEIR Felicity in this Return, will be set off by the unhappy Condition, which they shall leave condemned Sinners in.* This will be a wonderful foil to set that off by. Those on the left Hand, are Sentenced to depart into Everlasting Fire. The Place wherein they are to undergo the execution of the fearful Sentence, is probably supposed to be in this lower World. And the other are no sooner entered on their way to the Paradise of Delight, the Palace of Glory, but they leave the lower World in Flames behind them, turned into an Hell for the Punishment of those that are God's Enemies, and Sinners fallen into the Miseries unto which they had been doomed, yelling out their bitter Lamentations forever. This they shall see. And what a lustre will it put upon their astonishing Felicity, when they shall herein discern what a distinguishing favour is shown to them of meer Grace, from those who had formerly been their fellow-Sinners?

2. *BELIEVERS will be inconceivably happy, in their Everlasting Abode with Christ, in the full Fruition of the Glory of that Place.* And now they are come to the Top of their Felicity. This is the highest Pitch, that they can arrive at. And now should I essay to give a Description of the Glories of that State, I

should but betray mine own Ignorance. None can tell, but such as have been in the Third Heavens: And could any know, he were not able to utter it. We in our present Condition are not capable of Conceiving or Crediting thereof. But we may take a Taste of this, (and no more then a Taste, we are not here to expect) in Three Particulars, viz. *The Entertainment they shall find there: The Employment they shall there follow; And the Duration of both.*

1. *TOUCHING their Entertainment* which they shall find there. The Apostle thought it enough to say of it, 1 Theſ. 4. 17. *Then we which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; so shall we ever be with the Lord.* And indeed, this comprehends under it all the future Blessedness of the Children of God. But there are some Particulars by which this is elsewhere intimated. The principal whereof are such as these,

(1.) *WE may suppose that their Lord Redeemer will there present them to his Father.* And what a blessed Presentation will that be? We are told of being *presented before the presence of his Glory*, Jude 24. Which may aim at this. And Christ is said to *present his Church to himself, a glorious Church*, Eph. 5. 27. How this shall be is beyond our Capacity now to understand. But what an astonishing Interview will it be, when Christ shall bring them into the presence Chamber, and set them before his God and their God, and say, *These are they whom thou gavest me, and I redeemed them.* When the Father shall give them the most ravishing Testimonials of his infinite Love for them, and the greatest Welcome in that City of God that they are capable of.

(2.) *HE will make them to possess the same Heaven with him.* They shall be with him, where he is, Joh. 17. 24. Not in the Ubiquity of his Deity, but in the Royal City, where his Residence is, and where his Glory is most manifested. Heaven is called the *Habitation of God's Holiness, his Dwelling Place, his Throne, the City of the great King.* These were registered Citizens of this Place when they were converted, and had a sure Title to it bestowed on them. But now they enter into it, to take Possession of it in their own Persons. It would be too hold a stroke to go about to offer at a Description of this Place, to give a Draught of all the Streets of this City, and the wonderful Accommodations there are provided in it, for all those who are there to inhabit. What the Scripture speaks of it, must be allowed to be allusive, expressed by Metaphors borrowed from Earthly Things, suited to our present Conceptions, and for the exciting of our Affections to it. But yet there is something analogous intended in them, tho' infinitely transcending these faint Resemblances. Our Saviour tells us of *many Mansions* there - Of his *going before to prepare* for his People against their coming thither, Joh. 14. *begin.* And it must needs be a very Glorious & Magnificent

rificent Place, being the Palace of the great King, in which he will entertain all his Favourites. For Amplitude it encircles the Starry Heavens with its Pavement: For Delight it is called the Paradise of God; and the Eden of old was but a dark shadow of it; the Floor of it is resembled by Gold; and the Gates by Pearls; and the Buildings to most precious Stones. It is a Place, upon which Infinite Wisdom employed it self, to make it fit for the blessed Abode of those who were to be the Heirs of Glory. Here Christ is, and here shall they be. And there is nothing wanting in it, to give them the most perfect Satisfaction.

(3.) *THEY shall be Partners with Christ in the same Heavenly Glory which he enjoys.* True, there will be great Disproportion in Degrees. He shall be glorified as the Head, and they as the Members. He shall be acknowledged to be the first-born and principal Heir; but they shall be *Joynt Heirs* with him, in one and the same Inheritance, *Rom. 8. 17.* They are therefore said to *reign with him*, *2 Tim. 2. 12.* There is not only a Glory provided for them, but the same that the Man Christ hath, they share in with him. There is a Throne provided for them to sit upon, and it is the same that he himself sits on, *Rev. 3. 21. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I overcame, and am sit down with my Father in his throne.* There is a Glory, which Christ as God, is everlastingly possessed of, which is incommunicable; but there is a Glory, which Christ as Mediator, obtained by Covenant, and purchased by his Obedience, and in this he hath interested all his Children. He bought it in their Name, and will therefore confer it upon them. There is a participation in the Glory of the Person of Christ; as the Wife is honoured by the dignity which her Husband enjoys. And all the Honour which Christ hath merited for them, shall be bestowed on them. And how great that is, let them tell, who are able to grasp the Notion of Infiniteness, and Eternity; for such a weight it is, *2 Cor. 4. 17.*

(4.) *THEY shall see and enjoy him in that Glory.* To be with him, doth not only intend a being in his Company, but a participation in all the Sweetness and Desirableness of it. As he is the Object as well as the Author of our Felicity, so the Vision and Fruition of him, will be our great Blessedness. There is an Inchoation of this here, for there is a Communion between him and them in this World, *1 Joh. 1. 3. That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, & with his Son Jesus Christ.* And this they do prize above all other things, *Psal. 27. 4, 5.* But alas! what is this to that? I shall not descend to the Particulars in which this is to be had, but only glance at the Glory of this Vision and Fruition in that Place, in three or four Particulars,

[1.] *THEY shall see and enjoy him intimately.*

It is recorded concerning *Moses* in this Life, as a peculiar Privilege, *Exod. 33. 11. and the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh with his friend.* Thus it shall be there with every Believer. Christ and his saved ones, shall unbosom themselves one to another, with the most enlarged Freedom. There will be compleat Familiarity between him and them in the Kingdom. His Majesty shall not there terrify them; they shall not fear and quake, as *Moses* did here. There shall be that intimacy that there is between the most loving Husband, and the most beloved Wife, and transcendently greater. We read, in *Psal. 25. 14. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him: and he will shew them his covenant.* They shall then lie in his Bosom, enjoy his Embraces, *know him as they are known by him,* according to their Capacity. There shall never be any estrangedness between them; but he shall, having resigned the Kingdom into his Father's Hand, spend his Eternity in their Company. And how blessed will they reckon themselves, being so near to their only Beloved, who was *the Chief of ten Thousands?*

[2.] *THIS Vision and Fruition shall be inseparable.* When they were here, if they could but now and then, steal a Sight of him, or obtain a Kiss from him, it was better than Wine, their Hearts were ravished with it, and they reckoned themselves happy. But alas! these Interviews were soon over: He was withdrawn, they lost Sight of him, and knew not where to find him; then it was a dreary Day, they sat Solitary, and pin'd away with Love-Sickness. Now and then a Visit, was as much as they could enjoy of his more sensible Manifestations of himself to them: But how they shall be lodged in his Bosom, and his Light never be beclouded from them more. They will not be interrupted Careless which they shall have from him, but they shall constantly solace themselves in him. There will be no more Coyness on their parts, nor Anger on his, but the Delights which they shall enjoy, shall be both full and uninterrupted.

[3.] *THEY shall have it immediately.* There is a vast difference between mediate and immediate Communion with Christ. The mediate, is incomparably better than all the Delights that this World can afford. There is no such ravishing Joy in this Life, as that of a Soul under the Sealings, and shedding abroad of the Love of Christ in him: But it is a very little thing when compared with that which is to be had from him there. This difference is alluded to, in *1 Cor. 13. 10. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.* The Glass of Ordinances is but dim; all in it is accommodated to Earthly Notions; there is but a little Portion known of him thereby, and that very obscurely. We now have but Pictures, and Draughts of him, and these very imperfect: We now enjoy him in Promises, and by Faith. But it is another manner of thing to be in his Presence, sitting at his right Hand,

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gazing on him, and receiving at his own Hand, all the Good which was laid up in the Promises.

[4.] *THEY shall have it compleatly.* It is far from being so in this Life, and that not only by reason of the imperfection of the Media by which it is enjoyed, but also from the impotency of our Organs to entertain it: We are not capable of such Visions and Fruitions at the present. We are but Children in this Life, and they are childish Things that we are entertained withal; and yet there is abundance of Satisfaction in them. But when once we are made compleat in Christ, in those Degrees which we now long for, then shall our Sight and Enjoyment of him be made compleat too. Then shall we know as we are known, see as we are seen, and be filled full herewithal. We shall then dwell at the Fountain of his Love, and the reciprocal ardours of Affection between him and us, shall break over all Banks and Bounds, and we shall be entirely satisfied, both in Soul and in Body. Then shall we come to our Rest.

2. *TOUCHING the Employment which they shall there follow;* it becomes us to believe that it shall be truly happying, rather than over-curiously to conjecture particulars about it. That glorified Saints in Heaven, will be employed there, is certain; for the formal Happiness of a Rational Being consists in Eupraxia: And as they will then be *perfected in Holiness*, so all their Employment will there be holy. There will be no fleshly Lust gratified, no carnal Design driven. And as they are now in a State of Glory, all their Occupation will be glorious. And it is certain, that when damned Sinners are Everlastingly Roaring & Howling, under the Extremity of Infernal Plagues and Torments, these shall be Evernally Singing of Hallelujah's, Rejoycing & making Melody in the Presence of God and the Lamb, causing Heaven to ring, from one end to another with Acclamations of Joy, tuned to an Heavenly Consort, in prospect of those things which they see and possess; and in the Acknowledgments of the unspeakable Grace by which they had been saved: Which if Hell can be acquainted withal, and might but have a peep-hole to discover, how would it fill them with unspeakable Bitterness, Tortures, and Blasphemies? They are made for immediate Communion with Christ, and that is a rational Communion, which will occupy their whole Powers in the maintaining of it. They there enjoy a perpetual Sabbath, and therefore the Business they shall be taken up withal, shall be Sabbatical. They will perpetually employ Understanding, Will, Affections, Heart, Hand, Tongue, in shouting forth the Glory of God, for which they were made. And this shall be without Intermission; for there is no Night there. And they are adjoynd to a glorious Assembly of Angels and Saints, with whom they are to maintain Communion, which will also be full of Employment, who while they are solacing themselves together, in the Memorials of the

Wonders of God's Love in their Salvation, they shall make new Anthems, and sing new Songs to the Praise of their God & Redeemer, with the most astonishing Raptures of Love and Joy, while their Spirits are fresh and untired, and not in the least clogged with the Heaviness which here often disturbed, and allayed their Fellowship with him.

AND if any would know more about this Affair, let them labour to make sure of this to be their Portion, and then wait patiently in Hope till they come there; and they shall be abundantly satisfied.

3. *FOR the Duration of this Glory, which they shall there be invested withal; it shall be forever.* And this is the Crown and Felicity of all the rest. Might their Happiness have an End, the very Fore-thoughts, and Expectation of it, would eat out the Marrow of their present Delights. There is an Eternity to which all Reasonable Creatures are appointed by the Law of their Creation, and this must be spent, either in Happiness or Misery. Now as Happiness is secured to all Believers, so the tenor of it was, for *Everlasting*, Joh. 3. 16. And for that end, all that which will contribute to their future Happiness in Glory; hath a stamp of Eternity upon it. God, who is the Supreme Object of their Blessedness, is from Everlasting to Everlasting. The Lord Jesus Christ, in whose Embraces they shall be satisfied, liveth for ever, and will endlessly Communicate himself to them. Heaven, where they are to rest through their long Eternity, is a *City that hath Foundations*, and is not made of perishable matter: Not only are the Joys thereof, but *the Pleasures are Everlasting*, Psal. 16. ult. Here they had *no continuing City*, but now they are come to one. Here they wandred about as Pilgrims and Strangers, but now they are gotten Home, & shall no more be dislodged, but *abide there for ever*, 1 Thef. 4. 17. There is no Delight will wax old there, but run new continually, and all the Streams of it enjoy a perpetual Perenity. And as the greatest Bitterness in that Cup which is given to Wicked Men to drink in another World, is, that *their Worm dieth not, and their Fire is not quenched*: And could they have any Hope of a Jail-Delivery at last, it would greatly mitigate their Sorrows; whereas this makes their Hearts to die of Despair: So this is the sweetness of Heavens Felicities; that they shall abide for ever, and Millions of Ages shall not bring them one Moment nearer to a Period. They shall die no more, but because Christ their Saviour liveth, they shall live also.

U S E. IF this Truth were well thought of, *what abundant Consolation would it afford to the Children of God, while in this Life, where they meet with many Sorrows, and Temptations?* It is enough to cheer up the drooping Spirits of Believers, when at any Time they are disconsolate, under many Changes, and Disquieting Trials they encounter. And Oh! that you would make more Use of this Cordial than you do. Be often reflecting on your Interest

Interest in Christ, and from the ice entertain your selves with the Contemplation of the *Rest which remains for the People of God*. And here you will find enough to counter-balance, all that in this Life can offer it self to imberter your Spirits. When the Providence of God brings us under Losses, Crosses, Bereavements, Disgraces; we are frowned upon in the face of outward things, and are insulted over by the Ungodly; we are assulted by Satan, and disquieted in our own minds, and we here see nothing else but Clouds & Darknes hanging before us. Now it is good to look forward to this happy Day. Remember, the Covenant past between Christ and you is *an Everlasting Covenant*, the Mercies of it are sure. He who hath past his Word to you, will never break it, nor will he suffer you ever to fall out of his Favour. And now resolve, that if Matters be so, you have reason to look over these Trials, to that Joy which is laid in for you. Think in the severest of them,

though it be thus now, yet ere long my Saviour will come and fetch me home to his own Place; the Joyful Marriage Day is drawing on apace; the Bridegroom is but making ready for it, suiting all things for so stately a Solemnity: A little while, and I shall see him come with Glory, I shall meet him, and go with him, and enjoy him Eternally. Then I shall be out of the reach of all Devils and Evils. Then Sin and Sorrow shall be no more. Then shall I be ever filled, and never glutted with his Company, be everlastingly satisfy'd with Celestial Light and Love, and ravished with Joys that are full & endless. Live then always as such, who firmly look for such things as these are ere-long. And *let not your Hearts be troubled* at any thing which intervenes, but swallowed up with the Extatical Hope of this Glory.

[JULY 2. 1700.]

S E R M O N CXLVII.