

to make sure of your Vocation; and then remember, that as God hath determined, that you must pass through this *dark Entry*, and hence there is no avoiding it, so Christ hath turned it from being a Mischief into a Benefit, and hath taken it out the Curse, and put it into your Inventory. And because you must Dye, make it your great Business to Dye well, and then you need not be afraid of it, but be able to look on it with this reflection, This also shall turn to my Account.

[OCTOBER 24. 1697.]

SERMON CXXXIX.

II. **WE** proceed to consider the Happiness of Believers at their Death, which is here asserted and described. That these must Dye as well as other Men hath been Discoursed, and the Reasons of it Exhibited. That which is now to be made appear, is their certain Happiness when they Dye. And here two Things may be cleared, viz. 1. *That all Believers, and none but such shall be happy at their Death.* 2. *The things wherein this Happiness of theirs doth consist.*

1. **THAT** all Believers, and none but such, shall be happy at their Death. Death is the common Lot of all Men, *Psal. 49. 10. & 89. 48.* Every Godly Man expects it, and will say as he, *Job 30. 23. For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.* But to be happy when they come to Dye, is a Prerogative of those that are entitled to Christ by Faith in him. According to *Rev. 14. 13. Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.* Death indeed was brought in as a Penalty, being the execution of the threatening, *Gen. 2. 17.* It was therefore Sin that introduced it, *Rom. 5. 12.* and so it is part of the Curse: and all the poison of it lies in Sin, which is its sting, *1 Cor. 15. 56.* But this Curse is removed from the Children of God, and they may make that triumphant Challenge, *ver. 55. O Death, where is thy sting?* It can therefore no longer obstruct their Felicity. But that is not all, it shall also contribute to their well Being, for which reason it is put into their Inventory, *1 Cor. 3. 22.* There is an Inchoate Blessedness, which God's People partake in in this Life, which they would not exchange for all the delights of this World, which the most flourishing Minion of it doth enjoy; but Death passeth them over to a yet more glorious State, and makes an inexpressible advance of their Happiness. Every Believer hath this secured to him, for the Promise of Eternal Life is settled on all such without exception, *Job. 3. 16.* It is therefore indefinitely asserted, in *Psal. 116. 15. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.* But the Wicked are not so: And tho' Death easeth them of some present Calamities of this Life, according to *Job. 3. 17, 18.* yet in the whole, it adds to their

Misery, in that it puts an end to all their Hopes, shuts up their Day of Grace, posits their Souls to Eternal Torments, and lays by their Bodies in Corruption, to be reserved for an amazing Resurrection, and more astonishing Eternity. The Foundation of this felicity of the Sons of God, is laid in the Covenant of Grace, whose Promises engross this. For we are told, *1 Tim. 4. 8. Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.* But this will be made to appear by considering the thing it self; we pass on then to consider,

2. **THE Things wherein this Happiness of theirs doth consist?**

Ans. IN sum, There are the precious Benefits which Christ hath reserved for, and will confer upon them at that time, and these refer to the whole Man, in both the constituent Parts of it. Man consists of two essential Parts, Soul and Body; the Union of these two denominates the Man entire; and so the separation of them divides the Man from himself; the Soul, being made for the Body, is but a part of the Man, when divided from it, because it wants something that is of the essence of Humanity: And the Body when left by the Soul, is a Carcass. But for all this, tho' God hath appointed them to such a separate state, during his good Pleasure, there are those Priviledges bestowed on each of them, for which we may truly call them happy. We have an account of these severally, and may accordingly take them up.

1. **LET us take a prospect of the Happiness of the Soul, or the benefits it enters upon at Death.** The Soul is the principal part of the Man. It is by this that he is a reasonable Creature, and enjoys a more noble Being than any other piece of the visible Creation, and is but a little lower than the Angels. As therefore, by the loss of this, the Man is undone, (*Mat. 16. 26.*) so, if it be well with this, he is certainly made for ever. Now the Believers Soul doth, upon its quitting the Body, enter upon Blessedness, in some respect perfect. *Happiness may be said to be perfect, either Essentially, or Complementally.* Now it is a Complement of the perfect Felicity of the Soul, to enjoy the Body in Conjunction with it, participating in its delights, and conglorify'd together with it, in which respect, it is not yet perfectly blessed, because it waits for that happy re-union, of which it hath a natural desire. Hence that, *Rom. 8. 23. —Waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.* There is also the gathering together of all the Elect, and the making up of all Christ's Redeemed in the Church Triumphant, which will contribute to the Complemental Happiness of Believers, for which he must wait till the Consummation of all things. But as to that which is the Essential Happiness of the Soul, considered, as it is a Spiritual Substance, it enters upon that at Death. And this is it we are now to Contemplate. But what low shallow Conceptions are we capable of entertaining at present,

about

about this Myſtery ? It is but a little that we know about the nature & preſent ſtate of our Souls, how much leſs then of that which is future ? Nay, the Word of God it ſelf tells us, that *it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be*, 1 Joh. 3.2. i.e. in that Clarity which we ſhall ſee theſe things in hereafter. But, if the Philoſopher could ſay, that a little, tho' confuſed knowledge of Heavenly things, is to be preferred to a great deal, how diſtinct ſoever, of Earthly ; may not the Chriſtian much more ? Let us then ſoberly inquire into this matter, by the Light which the Word of God affords us for our help, by laying open the Deſcription which our Catechiſm gives us of it. Here then, two Things are to be taken notice of, viz. 1. *The Immediateness of the Souls Happineſs at Death.* 2. *The Things wherein it is then made Happy.* Of which ſeverally,

1. *THE Souls of Believers do at Death Immediately enter upon their Happineſs.* And this differenceth the ſtate of the Soul, from that of the Body, from the time of our Diſſolution, till the Reſurrection ; the Body is reſerved for its Glory, but the Soul is preſently inveſted with it. There is a drowſy Opinion of ſome, who ſuppoſe the Soul to fall aſleep in the Body, and continue ſo till awakned by the Sound of the laſt Trumpet, and ſo make the Happineſs of that alſo, to be only in reverſion ; and they produce ſome miſinterpreted Scriptures in defence of it. A very diſcouraging Opinion, and enough to terrify a Child of God at the thoughts of Dying : For, *tho' it be after but a poor and imperfect manner that he glorifieth God here, yet it is better than not to do it at all.* It can be no comfortable thing to loſe part of that Happineſs by dying, the Perfection whereof we were groaning after. Had it been ſo, Paul needed not to have been *in a ſtrait*, Phil. 1. 23. The Queſtion would ſoon have been reſolved : it is better to ſerve God in infirmity, than not at all, better to have obſcure ſights of God, than loſe all, and be in no better Condition at preſent neither for Soul nor Body, than the Beaſts that periſh. But it is nothing ſo, but quite otherwiſe : The man's actual Happineſs is wonderfully increaſed by Dying : The Soul in its very paſſage out of the Body paſſeth into a wonderful Felicity, the Change is made in a moment. And this may be confirmed,

(1.) FROM *Scripture Teſtimony* : Which gives us abundant Light for the eſtabliſhing of this Concluſion. Paul tells us, Phil. 1. 21. *To dye is Gain.* But what Gain, if neither Soul nor Body be immediately bettered. And he adds to aſſure us, ver. 23. that if he dye, he ſhall *be with Chriſt, and that is far better than to live.* Surely then it contributes to his well being. What ſaid Chriſt to the dying Thief, Luk. 23. 43. *To day ſhalt thou be with me in Paradise.* This muſt both intend his Soul, and point to a ſtate of Bleſſedneſs. Dying Stephen commends his departing Soul to Chriſt, aſking his entertainment of it, Act. 7. 52. The Beggar's Soul is preſently waſted into Abraham's

Bosom, Luk. 16. 22. This is given for the Encouragement of the Martyrs, who were called to loſe their Lives in Chriſt's Cauſe, Rev. 14. 13. And for this reaſon the Scripture ſo often ſpeaks of Godly Men's being *gathered to their People*, as of *Jacob*, Gen. 49. 33.

(2.) FROM the *Nature of the Soul*, conſidered with the ſtate the Believer is in by the New Covenant. This may be opened in a few Particulars ;

1. *THE Reasonable Soul is capable of performing its Operations in a ſeparate State independent on the Body.* The Body indeed was an Organ fitted for its Uſe, but the Soul is a Spiritual Subſtance, and hath its Faculties proper to it, and inſeperable from it, which are powers of Operation ; it doth many things by itſelf, without the help of the Body ; while in it, which prove it able to act without the aid of this Inſtrument. It hath an Underſtanding, Will, and Affections, like the Angels, and can therefore contemplate, chuſe, chuſe, rejoyce, &c. The Soul is a Spirit, and Spirits have their Operations, elſe Angels would be uſeleſs.

2. *THE ſeparate Soul, cannot be, and be out of Action.* It is a ſtrain beyond Hyperbole, of them that ſay, Angels and the Souls of Men are *pure Acts*, which is to aſcribe an abſolute Deity to them ; but yet, the Souls Activity is inceſſant, and is ſo twiſted in its nature, that it muſt ceaſe to be a Soul in loſing of it. The Soul in the Body never ſleeps, is never tired, is always buſy, tho' the Body be aſleep. It is contrary to the nature of a Soul to lie ſtill, and nothing but Annihilation can put it out of Action, which it doth not undergo at Death.

3. *IT muſt needs be happy or miſerable in ſub Activity.* And it is certain, that the Souls of Believers muſt be happy. For the Covenant-Promiſe hath ſecured their Bleſſedneſs at the end of their Race. Now their working time is over, and *their Works* are to *follow them*, Rev. 14. 13. i.e. the Glorious Rewards of them. The departing Soul goes to receive its Reſtitution, and conſequently muſt either enter into a ſtate of Felicity or Infelicity ; nor can the active Soul be conceived to be in neither : either it acts with Delight, and that is its Happineſs, or with Sorrow, which is its Miſery.

4. *THE ſeparate Soul paſſeth immediately unto a Judgment.* Death and Judgment are connected, as things whereof, one treads on the heels of the other, Heb. 9. 27. *It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this, the judgment.* So that beſides the Great and General Judgment of the Laſt Day, where both Soul and Body will be openly proceeded with, the Soul paſſeth a particular one, on its Departure, for the diſpoſing of it till that other comes. And what need of this, but that it may preſently enter upon its Joy ? There would be no Occaſion for it, if the Soul ſlept till the Laſt Day.

5. *WICKED Men's Souls do immediately paſſe*

into Torments. Their Misery is not delayed, nor do they sleep. For tho' this Truth be put into a Parable, yet the main scope of the Parable, is to give us an account of the vast Change that Death makes upon men. And we read of the *rich man*, Luk. 16. 23. *In Hell he lift up his eyes being in Torments*— And by parity of reason we may argue, to the present Felicity of the Souls of the Godly; and doubtless, *Abraham's Bosom, where Lazarus's Soul was carried by a Convoy of Angels*, ver. 22. intends that which is contrary to Hell, and to point us to Heaven's Glories, in a state of Blessedness. And how comfortable tho't is this for the Children of God to think upon, when they have a prospect of their Dissolution, and feel in them the tokens of the hastning of it; to look forward and say, this dark Entry opens into a glorious Light; a few moments, and this Soul will take its flight from a mortal Body, and the first look it shall make, will satisfy it, when it findeth itself compassed with the badges of Eternal Glory: When its Doubts are all fully satisfy'd, and it shall pass into those Hands which shall guard it to the Eternal Kingdom. Let us believe this firmly, and let our persuasion of it, make us cheerfully ready to depart at the first Call.

2. *PASS we now over to the Things wherein the Soul is then made Happy*: These are two, 1. *It is made perfect in Holiness.* 2. *It passeth into Glory.* And what a World of Felicity do these grasp in them? Here then,

1. *THE Soul is then made perfect in Holiness.* I shall here wave insisting on the Enlargement which the Soul now receives from the Inconveniences it suffered in and with the Body: either as to its Operation in the Body, which through the defects & infirmities of it much impeded its work; or in regard of its Sympathy with the Body, in all those sorrows and troubles that attended it, which were many and grievous, from all which it is set at liberty, Rev. 14. 13. *They rest from their Labours.* Here is that which will swallow up all: The Work of Sanctification is now consummated. We are made holy in Regeneration, the *Image of God is renewed in us in Holiness*, Eph. 4. 14. And when this was done for the Man, he began to live. But this was but in part. How happy then will he be, when this is arrived at the top of Perfection? And here let us take a brief account of this matter, in which the Nature of this Benefit will be opened, and the Soul's Felicity by it made to appear, in a few Glances.

1. *MAN is made happy, only by reaching the End of his Being.* It is a Maxim undoubted, that the End, and the Good of a thing are one. Now the Good that Man was made capable of, was Happiness; and there was a way laid out for him to obtain it in and by, and in the missing whereof, he must needs be miserable. For man to lose his End, is his Misery. If the Reasonable Creature do finally fall under Vanity, he is undone, which he must do, if he miss his end, for that is the very Nature of Vanity.

2. *THE Glory of God was Man's last End.* That which is the highest Object of Man's Service, that must be his last End; which can be no other but God and his Glory. There is a Service and a Reward, but the latter must pay an entire subordination to the former. God hath made such a Connexion between our Glorifying him, and Enjoying of Eternal Life, that Man's Happiness or Misery turns upon it, 1 Sam. 2. 30. *Them that honour me, I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.*

3. *IT was necessary for Man's being able thus to glorify God and be happy, that he should have a Principle of Holiness concreated with him.* There was a Rule given to Man, in compliance with which, he was to serve to his End, and because that Rule was holy, it was necessary that he should have an habitual Holiness conformable to it, else he would have certainly come short of it, which could not agree with Infinite Wisdom in making him for such an End. We are therefore told, Eccl. 7. 29. *Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.*

4. *WHEN Man lost this Holiness, he utterly disabled himself from serving to his great End.* He did not fall out from special Government. God could still glorify himself upon him: but he could not now actually glorify God. Josh. 24. 19. *And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the Lord; for he is an holy God: he is a jealous God, he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.* Rom. 3. 12, 23. *They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doth good, no not one. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.* He thus became without strength, Rom. 5. 6.

5. *HE is again restored to this Power by the renewal of the Principle of Holiness in Conversion.* In this he is made a *New Creature*, 2 Cor. 5. 17. *Hereby, he was before was dead, is quickned*, Eph. 2. 1. And by being made alive, he begins to be able to put forth Life-Actions, tho' at first very infirm; for according to the strength of the principle influencing, such will be the Action done by it.

6. *IT is the Believers present Infelicity, that this Grace of his, is in this Life imperfect.* i. e. His Happiness cannot be perfect so long as it is thus with him, because there is so much of his former Misery abiding on him. And there is nothing equally afflictive to a Child of God, when himself, with this; all other Troubles of this Life are small, compared with it. *Paul can triumph over other Trials, and say, as Rom. 8. 18. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.* But of this he cries out as one under terrible distress, Rom. 7. 24.

7. *THIS Work of Sanctification in a Believer is Progressive, from the hour of his Conversion.* This Foundation is laid with a design to be perfected, Phil. 1. 6. In order whereto, as God affords his Word and Ordinances to be help-
ful

ful to this End, 1 Pet. 2. 2. So he affords suitable Influences of his Spirit to carry it on, and give Efficacy to all the Means, in pursuance of the New Covenant Promises for this, *Psal. 92. 12. Prov. 14. 18. Job 17. 9. But the righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger & stronger.*

8. *THERE is yet much of this Work to do, when a Saint comes to dye.* When their Death comes, it finds not the Work done, but their Blessedness is that they are still doing it, *Mat. 24. 46. Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing.* A Child of God groans under the sense of his sinful Imperfection to his last Breath, and sometimes is so Oppressed with it, as he seems to set in a Cloud.

9. *IN the instant of Death, all that remains to be done, is compleated.* No sinful Imperfection is to accompany any of God's Children beyond this Life. When that ends, their Souls have that denomination, *Heb. 12. 23. 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.* Their Sanctification is now compleated in all its degrees. And here,

(1.) *THERE is a total Cessation of Sin.* The defilements of it are wholly washed off. All habits of, and inclinations to Sin cease: Nor could the Soul without this be fit either for the Place or Company it is going unto. *Heaven admits no defilement, Rev. 21. 27.* Full Communion with an holy God cannot be had, while any dregs of pollution abide. Christ presents them to himself *without spot or wrinkle*. And a sinless Soul, must be an happy Soul.

(2.) *THEIR Grace now arrives to an entire Perfection.* 1 Cor. 13. 10. *But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part is done away.* Some Graces are reckoned Militant, and others Triumphant: The former are for our Warfare, in withstanding & vanquishing Temptation, and doing Duty; these will be perfected, in that they will enjoy a full Triumph over all that resisted them. But the other, which are principally Love & Joy, will be filled and run over, in the Exercises whereof the Soul shall solace itself forever. And being perfectly holy, it shall take compleat and unwearied Delight in all the Beauties, which it shall there possess.

U s e. *HOW happy then must the Soul needs be, in the possession of this Benefit?* When it is thus prepared to be filled with all the Glories of Heaven, all of which are full of Holiness, and can'thappily us no farther than we are holy? Then also shall we be enabled to Glorify God for ever, to the utmost Capacity of our Nature, most extensively and unweariedly. Where the loud Sound, of Hallelujah's, Eternally, shall not tire our Spirits, or make us weary. Let this then sweeten the thro's of Death to Believers. If a little Holiness in exercise be now so sweet to you, how precious will the Compleateness of it be? Let then,

the assured Expectation of this, make you reckon the Day of your Death, for better than that wherein you were born. And let such thoughts as these, *I am busining 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 Painsness, 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.

