

S E R M O N S

On the following

S U B J E C T S ;

- I. S A I N T S Imperfect whilst on E A R T H.
- II, III, IV, V, VI. S A I N T S Compleat in G L O R Y.
- VII, VIII. The B E L I E V E R Sealed.
- IX. The S A I N T ' s Extremity G O D ' s Opportunity.

WITH AN

A B S T R A C T

O F

Consul *Dean's* NARRATIVE, relating to his suffering Shipwreck, and wonderful Preservation, in the Year 1710.

By S A M U E L W I L S O N.

Published at the Request of the Church under his Care.

L O N D O N,

Printed, and Sold by A A R O N W A R D, at the *King's-Arms* in *Little-Britain*; and J O S E P H F I S H E R, against *Tom's Coffee-house* in *Cornhill*. 1735.



TO THE
Church of Christ,
Assembling in
GOODMAN'S-FIELDS.

*Much esteemed Friends, and dearly beloved
in the Lord :*

TEN Years are almost now
run out, since you first call'd
me to labour in the Word
and Doctrine among you :
An Employment, I trust, as delightful
to me, as, through the abundant Good-
ness of God, it has been made, in
A 2 some

iv *The Dedication.*

some Measure, serviceable and acceptable to you.

I have sometimes been thrown into a Degree of Confusion, to think I should be prevailed with, so young and unexperienced, to accept the pastoral Charge; a Charge so weighty and important. Under God, I am much indebted to you hitherto in the Discharge of it; who have been ready, upon every Occasion, to assist me with your Prayers and Advice, and, with the utmost Gratitude, to your Honour I mention it, you have always treated me with the greatest Tenderness, Affection, and Generosity.

When I think of you as my Care,
how awful the Reflection! *Who is*
suf-

The Dedication.

v

Sufficient for these Things? God is my Witness, that my Heart's Desire and Prayer to him is, to obtain Mercy, to be faithful in every Part of my Work, watching over you with all becoming Care and Concern, as one who is to give an Account. And as the ministerial Furniture is the Gift of God, and all Success depends on his Blessing, I promise my self you will not be wanting, in secret, in the Family, as well as in the Church, to send up your Cries to Heaven, that he who gives Bread to the Eater, and Seed to the Sower, would continually direct to such Portions of Scripture as may suit your Case, and, under a divine Agency, be made as useful as seasonable.

God

vi *The Dedication.*

God has said, many great and glorious Things concerning his *Sion*: The Church is his Temple, where the spiritual Sacrifices of Praise and Thanksgiving are offer'd up unto him in the Mediator's Name: He will dwell in the Midst of her, as her Glory and Defence; *nor shall the Gates of Hell prevail against her.* And as this is true of *Sion* in general, so the least Hill in that Mountain of God, is under his Care and Patronage; to every one of these, the Promise runs, as well as to his ministring Servants, *Lo, I am with you always, even to the End of the World*^a; and every Thing is included in that Engagement; for his Presence is the Glory of worship-

^a Matt. xxviii. 20.

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The Dedication. vii

ping Assemblies, and the great Security of religious Societies.

Purity of Doctrine, Impartiality in Discipline, Holiness of Life, and Unity of Affection, were the distinguishing Ornaments of the primitive Churches : Nor should it be slightly passed over by you when calling to Mind what God has done for you ; that the *dreadful* Errors of *Deism*, *Arianism*, *Socinianism*, *Sabellianism*, and *Pelagianism*, have not hitherto appeared among you, to your Trouble or Defilement. I need not tell you, that it is a Day of Apostacy, in which many lay in wait to deceive : Some are striking at the very Foundation of all Religion ; others denying and ridiculing Revelation, as unnecessary or contradictory ; and great Numbers
dispu-

viii *The Dedication.*

disputing the Deity, despising the Righteousness, and blaspheming the Person of our Redeemer: Some are making a Jest of the Work of Regeneration, and the Efficacy of the Spirit of God in it; though without the Knowledge of the one, and the Experience of the other, they cannot see the Kingdom of God: And not a few are looking on with a criminal Indifference, at the Spread of the Contagion. Permit me, therefore, in Faithfulness, solemnly to warn you to beware of those who would insinuate doctrinal Error is a harmless Thing; that Men may safely commune together, though they differ about the Object of Worship, the Foundation of their Hope, and the Grace which is necessary to make them meet for Heaven: The God
you

The Dedication. ix

you serve is jealous of his Glory ; he has put his Word into your Hands, let that be your Rule ; be serious in your Inquiries after, and earnestly contend for the Faith once delivered to the Saints ; hold fast the faithful Word : If others will not endure sound Doctrine, remember it is a Trust committed to you, which you are to transmit pure and uncorrupted to the rising Generation. I bless God, and it is the Joy of my Soul, that you are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ ; hold that fast which you have ; let no Man take your Crown.

Your steady Adherence to the Rules laid down in the Gospel, in receiving Members, in admonishing the Disorderly, and rejecting the Profane, will be as much your Security as Honour.

a

Faith-

x *The Dedication.*

Faithfulness and Prudence should direct your Inquiries, regulate your Examinations, and determine your Sentence. Some Cases be-speak Compassion, whilst others demand Severity ; nor are you to know the dearest Friend or nearest Relative, where Censure is justly deserv'd, lest Religion suffer, and the Ways of God be evil spoken of.

In Matters of an indifferent Nature, Forbearance, and a Readiness to yield to each other, will tend to preserve that Peace and Harmony which, for so many Years, has been your Mercy. Watch against angry Disputes and warm Debates, as what tend to Strife, Confusion, and every evil Work. And above all, remember the Eyes of God and Man are upon you, as to your Walk and Conversation .

The Dedication. xi

versation, your Profession supposes you are gracious ; and where Grace is, there will be the visible Fruits of it ; the World expects more from you than from others ; and your Attachment to the most evangelical Principles, will be no Proof to them of your Piety, where there is an unbecoming Deportment. Remember, the most provoking Wounds which Christ receives, are in the House of his Friends. And shall I repeat the Advice so often given you in publick, be as much with God in secret as possible, and as inabled by his Spirit, be earnest with him, that you may obtain Grace to be exemplary in Life, adorning the Doctrines of God your Saviour in all Things, and that you may be ripening for Heaven, and, in due Time, be transplanted from the
Church

xii *The Dedication.*

Church Militant to that which is
Triumphant.

I have only to add ; the following Sermons being printed at your united Request, I have purposely disposed them into that Order, and contracted them within that Compass which may be most suitable to Family Worship : That they may be of farther Use and Service to you in the more private Perusal of them, as, I trust, they were of some Use in their publick Delivery, and attended with a Blessing where Providence shall send them, is the earnest Request of,

Your Affectionate Friend

Barbican, *and Servant, in the Gospel,*
March 21,
1735.

SAMUEL WILSON.



S E R M O N I.

SAINTS ON EARTH imperfect.



I COR. xiii. 10.

*But when that which is perfect is come,
then that which is in part shall be
done away.*



THE Apostle having asserted the Necessity of Love to God, and the Saints for his Sake, as that which enters into the Experience, and is essential to the Character of a real Christian, without which, though he should speak with the Tongues of Men, or of Angels, he
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would

2 Saints on Earth imperfect.

would be no better than a *sounding Brass, or a tinkling Cymbal*; yea, though he had *the Gift of Prophecy, and understood all Mysteries, and all Knowledge*, and though he had *all Faith, so as to remove Mountains*, and though, from a Benevolence to humane Nature, and a generous Concern for the Distresses of his Fellow-Creatures, he might bestow all his Goods to feed the Poor; and from an inviolable Attachment to his Profession, should give his Body to be burned; yet, destitute of this divine Principle, he would be of no Account with that God, who searches the Hearts, and tries the Reins of the Children of Men, who cannot be deceived by the largest Pretensions, or the most plausible Appearances.

Having thus represented the Importance of this most excellent Grace, he proceeds to describe it in its Nature and Properties: *Charity suffereth long, envieth not, vaunteth not it self, is not puffed up, doth not behave it self unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in Iniquity; but in the Truth, beareth all Things, believeth all Things, hopeth all Things, endureth all Things.* And, to this he adds, as that which distinguishes it from some other of the christian Graces, particularly Faith and Hope, that it abideth, and never faileth; and, on this Account, he gives it the Preference: *Prophecies will fail, Tongues*

Saints on Earth imperfect. 3

Tongues shall cease, Knowledge, in its present Imperfection, shall vanish away; now we think and speak at best, but as Children under Age, seeing through a Glass darkly; but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away; then shall we see Face to Face, and know even as we also are known.

The Words visibly divide themselves into two Parts :

As, I. They suppose the Imperfection of the best of God's People, whilst on Earth. And,

II. Assert the compleat Felicity or glorious Perfection, which they shall be possessed of in Heaven; *but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.*

To form a just Apprehension of the Imperfection which attends the Believer, whilst travelling through this World, in his Way to a better, we must consider it under a threefold View; as it is natural, criminal, and comparative.

I. Natural Imperfection: This is found with every Order of Beings, who are finite, limited, and dependant.

Man was at first a most beauteous and happy Creature, innocent, pure and spotless,

4 Saints on Earth imperfect.

less, intelligent, wise and prudent, having more Understanding than the Beasts of the Earth, and made wiser than the Fowls of the Heaven^a. The Result of the divine Consultation, held between the eternal Three, was, *let us make Man in our own Image, after our Likeness, and let him have Dominion over the Fish of the Sea, and over the Fowls of the Air, and over the Cattle, and over all the Earth, and over every creeping Thing, that creepeth upon the Earth*^b. Blessed Creature, with a large and fair Inheritance! Made upright, pronounced to be very good, by him who could not be mistaken; made lower, indeed, but it was only a little lower than the Angels; placed in the midst of the Paradise of God; thoroughly furnished with every Thing he could want or desire, under the Smiles of his Creator, and Lord of the Universe. Man, thus in Honour, was yet imperfect, as he owed his All to the Bounty of his Creator, so he continued to enjoy it on the Tenure of his Will; all his intellectual Powers, and most agreeable Entertainments, arising from the Contemplation of the Mysteries of Nature, Providence, and Religion, or the Satisfaction, which flowed from the moderate Use of the Creature, fell infinitely short of the Perfections and Blessed-

^a Job xxxv. 11.

^b Gen. i. 26.

Saints on Earth imperfect. 5

ness of the great God. He knew much, and, perhaps, in a very easy Way; yet he knew not all Things, nor could he by searching find out God, or understand the Almighty unto Perfection. Though there was no Error found in his Judgment; yet there was not that intuitive Knowledge of Truth, which is peculiar to Omniscience. His Affections centered on God their proper Object; but they were the Affections of a Creature. His Will inclined to every Thing that was excellent; but was not immutable. So that in his best Estate, it might be said to him, *Canst thou measure the Waters in the Hollow of thine Hand, and mete out the Heavens with a Span, and comprehend the Dust of the Earth in a Measure, and weigh the Mountains in Scales, or the Hills in a Balance? Canst thou direct the Spirit of the Lord, or as his Counsellor teach him? Who taught him Knowledge, or shewed to him the Way of Understanding? Behold! Man, whole Nations of Men; yea, humane Nature at large, is, in his Account, but as a Drop of the Bucket, and as the small Dust of the Balance: All before him are as Nothing, less than Nothing and Vanity^c: Nor, is there a Seraph around his Throne, how pure, how bright, how glorious soever, but is in this Sense imperfect; they are all*

^c Isaiah xl. 12, 13, 14, 15, 17,

6 Saints on Earth *imperfect.*

the Production of the Father of Spirits, who alone is underived, self-sufficient and independant.

There is none like unto the Lord, who is great, whose Name is great in Might; to him, as to the King of Nations, Fear, and the most profound Reverence, are due; forasmuch, as among all the wise Men of the Nations, and in all their Knowledge, there is none like unto him; he is the true God, the living God, and an everlasting King; he made the Earth, by his Power; he hath established the Worlds, by his Wisdom; and hath stretched out the Heavens, by his Discretion; he is the high and lofty One, who inhabiteth Eternity; his Name is holy, and he dwells in a high and holy Place; who, in Heaven, can be compared unto the Lord; and who, among the Sons of the Mighty, can be likened unto him? He hath made the Earth, the Man, and the Beast, that are on the Ground, by his great Power, and by his out-stretched Arm. Wisdom and Might are his, he changeth the Times and Seasons, he removeth Kings, and setteth up Kings, he giveth Wisdom to the Wise, and Knowledge to them who know Understanding, he is God of Gods, and Lord of Kings; his Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and his Dominion from Generation to Generation, his Dominion is an everlasting Dominion, and all the
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Saints on Earth imperfect. 7

the Inhabitants of the Earth are reputed as nothing before him ; he doth according to his Will, in the Armies of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth, he is the Lord, the Lord God Almighty, who made the World, and all Things therein ; the Lord of Heaven and Earth, who dwelleth not in Temples made with Hands, neither is worshiped with Men's Hands, as though he needed any Thing, seeing he giveth to all Life, and Breath, and all Things. He hath determined the Times before appointed, and the Bounds of our Habitations, who worketh all Things according to the Counsel of his own Will, and in whom we live, move, and have our Being ; so that here he dwells alone, nor will he give his Glory to another ; some Creatures are, indeed, more perfect than others, and rise higher in their Resemblance of him who is infinitely perfect ; but the most exalted of them are not to be compared with the most High, in whose Sight, the Heavens are not clean, and who chargeth his Angels with Folly.

II. There is an Imperfection which is criminal.

This consists in the Loss of that Rectitude and Holiness, which the Law requires, which the Creator at first stamped on the Mind of Man, and of which Sin and Re-

8 *Saints on Earth imperfect.*

bellion have despoiled him; together with that Propensity to Evil, and Aversion to every Thing that is Good, which discovers it self, in the Omission of Duty, and Commission of Evil.

Here we may distinguish between the Continuance of our Powers and Faculties, in their Being, and natural Exercise, and that Purity and Spirituality, which attended them before the Fall. As the Angels, who kept not their first Estate, and are reserved in Chains, under Darknes, to the Coming of the great Day, are powerful and subtle, though impure and malicious Spirits, so we, have our Understanding, Will, and Affections now, as *Adam* in Innocence; though with this melancholy Difference, all his Faculties, in their various Use and Exercise, were devoted to the Honour, and employed in the Service, of his great Creator; but the Case is far otherwise with us, we are now wise, indeed, but it is to do Evil; there is a Will in Man, but it is to make Provision for the Flesh to fulfil the Lusts thereof; he has Affections, but they are earthly and sensual; Lasciviousness, Lusts, Excess of Wine, Revellings, and Banquetings, suit him best, and please him most. In the Pride of his Countenance, he will not seek God, if he could have his Wish, he would banish him entirely his Thoughts; and, when he speaks out the
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Saints on Earth imperfect. 9

Language of his Heart, it is unto God, Depart from me, I desire not the Knowledge of thy Ways: What is the Almighty that I should serve him? What Profit should I have in praying unto him? If Ingratitude is a Crime of a heinous Nature, the very Brutes may upbraid the Children of Men with it; for *the Ox knows his Owner, and the Ass his Master's Crib*; but they know not, they consider not, but as a *sinful Generation, laden with Iniquities, as a Seed of evil Doers, Children that are Corrupters, they forsake the Lord, and provoke the Holy One of Israel*^d. Nor is this Representation heightened, or aggravated, since we have the same Account from God himself, that *he saw the Wickedness of Man was great in the Earth, and every Imagination of the Thought of his Heart was only evil continually*^e. And our Lord, who needed not that any should tell him what was in Man, confirms this by observing, that, *from within, out of the Heart of Man, proceeds evil Thoughts, Adulteries, Fornications, Murders, Thefts, Covetousness, Wickedness, Deceit, Lasciviousness, an evil Eye, Blasphemy, Pride, Foolishness: All these Evils come from within, and defile the Man*^f.

^d Isaiah i. 3, 4.

^e Gen. vi. 5.

^f Mark vii. 21, 22, 23.

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10 Saints on Earth imperfect.

That the Want of original Righteousness, where it is the Consequence of a Crime, or Disobedience, is not meerly our Unhappiness, but our Fault, appears from considering the Nature of the Law, with the Reasonableness of its Demands, and the Continuance and Immutability of its Obligation. The Law requires Truth in the inward Parts, or Purity of Mind, as well as universal Obedience; this it required of *Adam*, and it found him, as God had made him, absolutely upright. Sin, committed, introduced a dreadful Change in the Creature, but none in the Law-giver; God is as much a Sovereign, his Law as strict in its Requirements, since Man was drove out of Paradise, as when in the Enjoyment of the Sweets of that delightful Place.

How harmless soever some may think the Corruption of humane Nature to be, *David* introduces it as an Article of his Confession, and mourns over it before the Lord, when in the Bitterness of his Soul he cries out, *Behold I was shapen in Iniquity, and in Sin did my Mother conceive me* ^s.

Here the inanimate and irrational Parts of the Creation, have the Advantage of the wicked, ungodly and impenitent, they are as perfect as their Creator pleased to make

^s Psal. li. 5.

them,

Saints on Earth imperfect. 11

them, and their Imperfection is purely natural, neither criminal, nor judicial, but, with Respect to fallen Man, it may be said, *How is the Gold become dim! How is the most fine Gold changed^h!* To say that he is now naturally holy and inclined to good, without a wrong Bias or corrupt Inclination, is to contradict universal Experience: To affirm it was always thus, is to oppose divine Revelation; and to imagine that it is venial, or in no Degree criminal, is an Affront to the Purity, and injurious to the Righteousness of the great Legislator, who has solemnly declared, that *no one Iota, or Tittle of his Law shall pass away, till all be fulfilledⁱ.* And to this we may add,

III. There is a comparative Imperfection, of which the best of Saints are the Subjects, whilst in this World.

This appears in comparing the Temper of our Minds, the Language of our Lips, and the Conduct of our Life, with the Law, that righteous Rule of Obedience, which is pure in its Nature, and large in its Reach and Extent.

Who among the sanctified whilst here, can say, his Heart is so clean as it ought to be, and wash his Hands in absolute Innocency? *The Law is holy*, says the great Apo-

^h Lament. iv. 1.

ⁱ Matt. v. 18.

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ble, and the Commandment holy, and just, and good; he adds, *I know that the Law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under Sin*^k. In this he bears a Testimony to the Excellence of the Precept, whilst he is humbled under a Sense of his own Deficiency. And this being true of all the Redeemed of the Lord on this side Glory, it is their Mercy, that though the Law will admit of no Abatement, and rigorously demands Perfection, Christ is made to them the End of the Law for Righteousness. He has magnified the Law, and made it honourable, nor can the Law now condemn his Members, being fully satisfied in all its Demands by his Obedience and Sufferings.

But, if we view them under the Change which supernatural and efficacious Grace has made in them in Regeneration, *all old Things are past away, and behold all Things are become new*^l; they are quite other Persons than formerly, acting from different Principles, upon nobler Motives, in another Manner, and with higher Views, than when walking according to the Course of this World, and the Customs of the Children of Disobedience, who are led Captive by Satan at his Will; this may in some Measure account for the Epithets of just, perfect and upright, given in Scripture to ma-

^k Rom. vii. 12—14.

^l 2 Cor. v. 17.

Saints on Earth imperfect. 13

ny of them, whose Failings standing upon Record prove, that though there was a very great Difference between them and the ungodly, yet they had not fully attained, neither were they compleatly perfect.

And as there are various Seasons in which the Elect are gathered in, some called at the first, others at the third, and some not till the eleventh Hour, some in Christ before others; so there are different Measures of Grace communicated to them, some are enabled to run with greater Speed the Race which is set before them, and to gain a larger Victory over Corruption, Satan and the World, than others, who are as truly in the Family, and designed for the same Place of Bliss and Glory, though moving more slowly in their Way to it. *Paul* himself, after he had fought the good Fight of Faith, and almost finished his Course, within Sight of the Goal, and ready to receive his Crown, expresses a noble Emulation, that no one should out-strip him: This one Thing, says he, I do, *forgetting the Things which are behind, I press towards the Mark for the Prize of the high Calling of God in Christ Jesus*^m.

Here the Saint with Blushing and holy Confusion, thinking on his Helps and Advantages, his Obligations and Expectations,

^m Phil. iii. 13, 14.

14 Saints on Earth *imperfect.*

is ready to cry out, alafs! What an unprofitable Servant! What a Cumberer of the Ground! How lean, barren and unfruitful! When others, planted in a Soil less promising, are fat and flourishing, visibly thriving as Trees of Righteousness, the Planting of the Lord, in whom he is now, as well as he will hereafter be glorious. He is far from repining, dares not murmur, or foolishly charge his God. The least Degree of Grace is infinitely more than he deserves; nor does he envy his Brethren, but rejoices in the Goodness of God towards them, he blames himself, and only himself, that he copies no more exactly after them, and is enabled to make no more Use of their Experience and Comfort, as a Means to excite his Diligence, and to quicken him in the Paths of Holiness. We are not, indeed, to expect the same Degrees of Light, Knowledge and Understanding, the same extraordinary Gifts and miraculous Endowments with the Apostles, or some eminent Martyrs or Confessors; their Work was special, and their Furniture proportionable: Nor will it be objected to us in the great Day, that some have had more Faith, Hope and Joy, than our selves, it is the Prerogative of the God of Heaven to divide to every Man as he will; and the weakest Babe has the one Thing needful, even that good Part which shall never be taken from him, Glo-

Saints on Earth imperfect. 15

ry being connected rather with Grace in its Kind or Nature, than with it in its Degree: But as every one to whom it is given will be solicitous after more, so there are few among the tallest Cedars in God's Labanon, but have Reason to observe, and are ready to acknowledge, that there are others who have gone beyond them.

And, after all the large Experience, clear Discoveries, and unusual Measures of Grace bestowed on the great Apostle; though he could say he came not behind the chief of the Apostles in any Thing, and had been caught up into the third Heavens, and admitted for a Time to look on some of the Glories of that blissful Place; though he could speak of Christ with Propriety as well as Pleasure, and say, *I know whom I have believedⁿ: He hath loved me, and given himself for me^o*; yet was he imperfect: Nor was there any Comparison between his Knowledge, Holiness and Joy, whilst in this earthly House of his Tabernacle, and that which he was possessed of when before the Throne in Presence of a risen Jesus.

Thus we see Perfection, in the most exalted Sense of the Word, is only to be found with the great and glorious God; and he is so absolutely and unchangeably in his Na-

ⁿ 2 Tim. i. 12.

^o Gal. ii. 20.

ture,

16 Saints on Earth imperfect.

ture, Counfel and Will. Comparative Imperfection is the constant Appendage of created limited Beings: And that which is criminal is confined to Earth and Hell. Whilst the most we can say of the Believer on Earth is, that he sees in part, and knows in part: And, is this a just Representation? What exalted Thoughts, O my Soul, shouldst thou then entertain of the great *I am!* Who has all Perfection centering in him, and from whom, as the Fountain of all Good, flows every Degree of it found in either World. Is there any Thing to be compared with him as thy Portion? Will any Thing short of Perfection satisfy the Cravings of an immortal Mind? Seek no longer the living among the dead; the Creature has it not, cannot give it. Who would live on broken Cisterns, when there is the Fountain of living Water.

This also accounts for the Preference which the Saint gives to his God above every Thing else, and discovers the Wisdom of his Choice, whilst he had rather endure Afflictions, and suffer the Loss of all Things, than excite the Resentment, and provoke the Indignation of an all-sufficient God, in whose Favour stands the Life of his Soul.

And who can describe the Terror, the Confusion, and bitter Anguish, which will attend the Disappointment of the wicked;
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Saints on Earth imperfect. 17

they choose the World for their God, and God, in Anger, says, They are joined to their Idols, let them alone. How is this their Way, their Folly, since the World, and all that is in it, is passing away? Their Mistake is partly evident now, since they are dissatisfied with the largest Acquisitions, and in vain, crying to their Idol, *Give, give!* But the full Discovery of their Madness, as well as Impiety, is reserved to another Day; when, with gnawing Grief, and tormenting Despair, reflecting on the fatal Delusion, they shall cry out, *Undone, undone for ever!*

And is the Saint criminally, as well as comparatively, imperfect whilst on Earth? How great is his Mercy, that there is a relative Perfection provided for him in *another*, that whilst defective in himself, he is complete in Jesus; who, by one Offering, for ever perfected those who are sanctified! This is the great Support of the Saint as the Ground of his Hope towards God, whilst in this World; and will be the Matter of his Praise and Triumph in a better. It is the spotless Robe of his Redeemer's Righteousness, that he produces in answer to the Accusations of Satan, the Remonstrances of Conscience, and the Charges of a malicious World; the Merit of this he daily pleads before the Throne; nor could he think of Death without Horror and Trembling, but as interested in his Death; who, having
C purged

18 Saints on Earth imperfect.

purged away his Sins by his Sacrifice on Earth, lives in Heaven to plead his Cause, and will, at length, introduce him into the divine Presence without Spot or Blemish, holy and unreprouable in God's Sight.

And can the Saint, having this God for his reconciled Father, Friend, and Portion, complain in the Want, or under the Loss of what, at best, is but external and foreign to his principal Happiness; and what might rather prove a Snare and an Hindrance, than a Blessing to him? What if *the Fig-tree should not blossom, neither should Fruit be in the Vines, the Labour of the Olives should cease, and the Fields yield no Meat, the Flock shall be cut off from the Fold, and there should be no Herd in the Stall*^p; yet, is it not enough that the Lord God is his Strength? ought he not, will he not rejoice in the God of his Salvation? if more were needful, could not All-sufficiency supply? How do Angels, and the Spirits of just Men live? they want not, they desire not earthly Treasures, they have their All they wish for, or can enjoy, whilst they dwell in the Presence of God; where *there is Fulness of Joy, and at his right Hand where there are Pleasures for evermore.*

^p Hab. iii. 17.