

THE  
DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERS  
OF  
TRUE BELIEVERS.

II. IN RELATION TO THEIR DISPOSITION AND PRACTICE AS CITIZENS  
OF ZION.\*

THE CITIZEN OF ZION DESCRIBED.

PSALM XV. 1.

*Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy  
hill?*

THIS psalm consists of a question and an answer. The former we have, ver. 1. the latter, ver 2. to the end.

In the question may be considered,

1. The party propounding it; *David*, for it is a psalm of his. He was a good man, concerned for his own soul. And therefore he proposes it for his own behoof, to impress his own soul with the necessity of his answering the character of a citizen of Zion. He was a prophet concerned for the souls of others: therefore he proposes it for their behoof, to impress men with the necessity of their answering that character.

2. The party to whom it is propounded; it is to the *Lord* himself. He is the infallible Teacher, and the sovereign Lawgiver, who has settled the constitutions of his own kingdom: from whom therefore we must learn them, that we may conform ourselves thereto.

3. The question itself, propounded in old Testament terms. The *tabernacle* was that tent which God set up among them, and where he met with his people before the building of the temple. It was a

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moveable place; therefore one is said to *abide* or sojourn there. The *holy hill* is mount Zion, Psal. ii. 6. comprehending the hill on which the temple was built afterwards by Solomon. That was a fixed habitation, therefore one is said to *dwel* there.

There are two parts of this question; and in New-testament language they are these.

(1.) Who shall be lodgers in God's lower house on earth, whom he will own as members of his family, and of the church militant, whom he will entertain with and admit to communion with himself in ordinances. There are many who call themselves of the holy city, and of his family, who flock about his tabernacle, whom he will disown as none of his, and so are strangers to the tabernacle-entertainment.

(2.) Who shall be dwellers in his upper house, inhabitants of heaven, and pillars in the temple of God. There are many who will never come there. O, who are they who will be taken within the gates of the holy city, while others as unclean lepers are shut out? Who are they, as if he had said, that I may strive to be one of them?

4. The order of the question; (1.) The sojourning in the lower; and then, (2.) The dwelling in the upper house: intimating that one must first abide in the tabernacle below, before he can be admitted to the holy hill above.

The doctrine natively arising from the words is as follows, *viz.*

Doctr. It challengeth every one's most serious and solemn consideration, what sort of persons, sojourning with God here, shall be inhabitants of heaven hereafter.

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall,

I. Shew what is implied in this object of our solemn and serious consideration.

II. Give the reasons of the doctrine.

III. Make some practical improvement.

1. I am to shew what is implied in this object of our solemn and serious consideration.

FIRST, All shall not be inhabitants of heaven: some will perish, and drop out of this earth into eternal darkness.

1. All the sons of men will not be saints in heaven. There will be a great company on Christ's left hand at the great day, doomed to everlasting fire, Matth. xxv. 41. Many of Adam's family will be lost for ever, as well as there are many of the angelic tribe lost. There are vessels of iniquity now, who will be vessels of wrath for ever fitted for destruction. They may have pleasant spots of earth, and large portions of it, who will have no place in heaven.

2. Many of those who are now about the tabernacle, will be amissing in heaven. Many members of the visible church are dead and rotten members, who will be cut off, and cast over the hedge, Matth. vii. 21—23. “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” Luke iii. 26, 27. “Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence you are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.” To see those fall short of heaven, who never had the tabernacle of God among them, is not strange: but many who in external privileges have been exalted to heaven, will be brought down to hell, Psal. cxxv. *ult.*

SECONDLY, They are persons of a distinguished character now, who shall be inhabitants of heaven hereafter.

1. They are not of the common gang of the world, “walking according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience,” Eph. ii. 2. The course of this world is the course of the multitude, and the multitude is on the road to destruction. Hence says our Lord, “Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” Matth. vii. 13, 14. They are nonconformists to the world, who are content to be the world’s wonder, Zech. iii. 8. not daring for their souls to venture on such practices as, being contrary to the law of God, others make no bones of, 1 Pet. iv. 4.

2. They are not of the common gang of professors neither, Matth. xxv. 2—4. Many professors are foolish virgins, that will get heaven’s door cast in their face. They carry as if they had found out the secret of making concord betwixt Christ and Belial, of reconciling the law to their lusts, of a broad and easy way to heaven, wherein men may carry the cloak of religion, and need not put off the old man. Those who shall be inhabitants of heaven are not so, Psal. xxiv. 3, 4. “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in his holy place; He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lift up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.”

3. Much less are they such as are of a distinguished character for wickedness, worse than the ordinary gang either of the world or of professors, Psal. i. 1. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." There are many who distinguish themselves from others, by their loose speaking, lying, swearing, &c. their loose living in revelling, drunkenness, filthiness, injustice in their dealings, &c. These may expect a distinguished place in hell, but none in heaven if they repent not.

Now, that they are persons of a distinguished character now, who shall be inhabitants of heaven hereafter, appears,

1. None but such have a right or title to heaven, Matth. xxv. 34. "Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." And however men may get possessions on earth, by force, fraud, and injustice, without a just right thereto; there is no such purchase to be made of heaven, or in it. Hence the apostle says, "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing," 2 Tim. iv. 8. "And if a man strive for masteries, yet he is not crowned, except he strive lawfully," chap. ii. 5. How can ye think to be inhabitants of heaven, that walk like the common gang of the world? Where is your title to it? Ye will say, ye have a title by faith, ye believe in Christ. If it be so, your title cannot be denied. But it is a demand that ye will not get refuted, *Shew your faith by your works*. A man may say he has faith, who has not works, but he cannot have faith without works, James ii. 14. By faith a man gets a right to heaven, but it is holiness of heart and life that is the evidence of that right. Hence says our Lord, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city, Rev. xxii. 14.

2. None but such are meet for it, and none come there, who are not made meet for it before they come. Hence the apostle *gives thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light*, Col. i. 12. Every one is in this world made meet for their place in the other world. God makes his chosen ones meet for heaven, and the reprobates themselves for hell, Rom. ix. 22. And none but those of a distinguished character are,

(1.) Meet for the journey to heaven. It is the hill of God, and it is not every one that is fit for going up that hill. The way to heaven lies upward, the way to hell is downward; therefore the latter is easy, and many chuse it; the former is difficult, and none

but those of a peculiar character and disposition have a heart for it. Hence the Lord says of Caleb, Numb. xiv. 24. "But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully; him will I bring into the land, whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it."

(2.) Meet for heaven itself. It is a holy hill; and all is holy there. It is just the reverse of the unholy world, and the unholy heart: and if a man with an unrenewed nature and heart could possibly be let in there, he would think he were all wrong, and he would leave the holy God, angels, and saints, pleasures, and the place, and down again to the beloved world, where he would get company, profits, pleasures, &c. suitable to his mind. He would exchange the rivers of pleasures for the pleasures of the flesh and of the world.

THIRDLY, In this world they sojourn with God in his tabernacle, who shall be inhabitants of heaven in the world to come.

Here I shall show,

1. What that sojourning is.
2. Why those who sojourn with God in his tabernacle, shall be inhabitants of heaven in the world to come.

*First*, I am to shew what that sojourning with God in his tabernacle is. It imports the following things.

1. The world is no more their home; they look on themselves as pilgrims and strangers on earth, and their head is homeward toward heaven. Hence the apostle speaking of some of the Old Testament worthies, says, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly if they had been mindful of that country, from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned: but now they desire a better country, that is an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city," Heb. xi. 13—16. They are brought out of the house of bondage, and are on their wilderness journey through the world, Cant. viii. 5; and the best conveniency they have by the way is not the tents of sin, but the tabernacle of God. There they draw water out of the wells of salvation, while going through the valley of Baca.

2. They are in a peculiar manner consecrated to God and his service, presenting their bodies living sacrifices, holy, acceptable unto God, which is their reasonable service, Rom. xii. 1. All Israel had access to the outer court of the tabernacle, but the priests only to the

tabernacle itself, as consecrated to God in a peculiar manner. While others are externally consecrated to God in baptism and the Lord's supper, they are all made *priests to God*, Rev. i. 6; they are *a royal priesthood*, 1 Pet. ii. 9. who shall be members of the general assembly of the first-born. They are made so in their conversion.

3. They are admitted to communion with God in ordinances public, private, and secret, and by tabernacle-communion with him are fitted for temple-communion with him above. Hence the Lord says, "O thou that art named the house of Jacob, is the Spirit of the Lord straitened? are these his doings? do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly?" Micah vii. 7. "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation," Isa. xii. 3. "If a man love me, says Christ, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him," John xiv. 23. The worshippers in the outer court only will get their eternal abode without among the dogs, sorcerers, &c.: but they that shall be inhabitants of heaven, come farther in even into the tabernacle itself: their souls are fed at his table, they find the smell of his garments as of myrrh, aloes, and cassia; and if they miss it at any time, it is the grief of their souls, and they are never at rest till they recover it again.

*Secondly*, I am to shew, why it is that those who in this world sojourn with God in his tabernacle, shall be inhabitants of heaven in the world to come.

1. They are born from above there. It is the waters of the sanctuary that the Spirit moves for the regeneration of those who are born of the Spirit. The word is the seed whereof the new creature is formed, 1 Pet. i. 23. Where God has a design of love to a people, he sets up his tabernacle among them, and gives his presence with ordinances for their conviction and conversion. "And so of Zion it shall be said, This man and that man was born in her," Psal. lxxxvii. 5. And so it is natural for them to breathe in that air.

2. They are made meet for heaven there, Eph. iv. 11, 12. They are nourished there unto eternal life; though those who remain dead in their sins receive nothing from ordinances but food to their lusts, whereby they grow worse and worse; those that are born for heaven, are nursed up for it in ordinances. There the bride the Lamb's wife makes herself ready for the consummation of the marriage; there she gets the pledges of the Lord's love, his love-visits and love-tokens, till she be brought home; and there the travellers are refreshed for their journey, Cant. iv. 6.

3. From thence are they transported to heaven, as the Israelites

from the wilderness to Canaan. The tabernacle is the nursery of grace, whence the trees of righteousness are transplanted into the garden of glory. It is the lower room of the house of God, from whence at death they are brought up to the higher rooms and mansions. And whoso sojourn not with God in the tabernacle below, shall never dwell with him in heaven.

II. The next general head is to assign the reasons of the doctrine, or why every one should seriously and solemnly consider what sort of persons, sojourning with God here, shall be inhabitants of heaven hereafter.

I. Because there is a heaven and hell, and every one must land in the one or the other at length. Sure the very being of a heaven and hell, being made known to us in the world, leaves men without excuse for the careless unthinking life they lead. Our being concerned in them challenges our consideration, since we are not as the beasts which being dead are done: and the weight and importance of them to us challenges the most solemn and serious consideration.

2. Because the laws of heaven admit only such and such persons as are so and so qualified into it, and adjudge others to be excluded for ever from it, John iii. 3. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Heb. xii. 14. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Psal. xxiv. 3, 4. forecited. And therefore the apostle tells us, that "if we live after the flesh, we shall die; but if we through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live," Rom. viii. 14. See Rev. xxi. *ult.* "There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." This is a good reason for our most serious consideration of the matter.

3. Because none who are capable of consideration, will ever see heaven without it. The work of grace begins there, Lam. iii. 40. "Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord." People may go rambling through the world at all adventures, they may go dreaming through it without serious thoughts of eternity, and land in the pit: but none will get to heaven either of these ways.

4. *Lastly*, Because if we miss of heaven, we are ruined eternally. Eternal salvation and damnation lie at stake: and if these cannot obtain solemn serious thoughts of us, our case is very desperate.

I come now to the application of this subject. And I exhort all of you solemnly, and seriously to consider, what sort of persons shall be inhabitants of heaven. Take this matter to heart, and bestow some thoughts upon it. And,

1. Consider of it solemnly, fixedly, and deliberately: *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways*, Hag. i. 5. You consider of other things deliberately and fixedly; why will you allow your soul-concerns only some passing thoughts by the by?

2. Consider of it with application to yourselves, Job v. *ult.* "Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know thou it for thy good. Prov. ix. 12. "If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself." Do this, that so you may see whether you yourselves be of that sort, that are in the road to heaven, or not.

3. Consider of it practically, that you may set yourselves to thrust in among those that so run as they may obtain, so strive as they may enter, and use such violence as they may take it by force.

4. *Lastly*, Consider of it divinely, as sifting your souls before the Lord to understand it of himself by his word. If you take the verdict of the world, or of your own hearts in the matter, ye will deceive yourselves; for so many are thought to get to heaven, that will not be found there. For motives to press this, consider,

*Mot.* 1. Heaven is not plished but with chosen people, 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Hell receives all comers, but many are sent off from the gates of heaven, and refused access. Hence says our Lord, Luke xiii. 25. "When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence you are." None can come to heaven, but,

1. Sealed ones, such as God has marked for himself, 2 Tim. ii. 19. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having his seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." They are sealed in the hidden man of the heart, with the privy seal of the Spirit, Eph. i. 13.—*Ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.* God's own image is stamped on them, in knowledge, righteousness and holiness. In the day of their conversion, the Lord puts his seal on them, and says, "They shall be mine in the day that I make up my jewels." They are sealed in the forehead, Rev. vii. 3. and xiv. 1. They look like him in the outward man, and walk as he walked, labouring to follow him, John x. 27.

2. Separated ones, separated from the world lying in wickedness, 2 Cor. vi. 17. forecited. They are separated from among the rest in this life, by the work of God on their souls, convincing, illuminating, and renewing them, and bringing them away to Christ. Grace



selects them out now from among the rest of mankind, 1 Cor. vi. 11. "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. Eph. ii. 2. In time past ye walked according to the course of this world," &c. They will be separated after this life, Matth. xxv. 32. "He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats;" and that will be a cleanly separation, not only in respect of manner of life, but of place.

*Mot. 2.* The most part will be found refuse, Matth. xxii. 14. "For many are called, but few are chosen." Christ's flock is but a very little flock, in comparison of the devil's drove, Luke xii. 32. The former are few, but the latter many, Matth. vii. 13, 14. The gospel-net has about it, the bad to be cast away, as well as the good to be gathered into vessels, Matth. xiii. 47. And since the most part will be cast out, should not each of us be saying, *Master, is it I?*

*Mot. 3.* Consider it is not easy to get to heaven, Matth. vii. 14. "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Luke xiii. 24. Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." It is a business of the greatest difficulty to get up the holy hill. Many have seemed to have been set fair on the way to it, who have miserably fallen short. The Israelites in the wilderness were an emblem of this, Heb. iv. 1. Nay, they that do get there, have a great pinch in getting forward, 1 Pet. iv. 18. *The righteous are scarcely saved.* There is all reason for the utmost diligence and circumspection, according to the apostle's exhortation, Phil. ii. 12. *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.* Our work is great, our strength small, our enemies are many, and their opposition is great: these require striving, wrestling, fighting, using violence, &c.

*Lastly,* It is not a matter to be careless and indifferent about, whether we shall get there or no. There are two things about it, that may move us to the deepest concern. (1.) The greatness of the happiness or misery that is before us. No tongue can express, nay nor heart conceive, the happiness of heaven, and the misery in hell. The one is shadowed out to us by the best things here, the other by the worst; but as heaven is better than the best here, hell is worse than the worst. (2.) The eternity of that happiness or misery. That is it that accents the joys and praises in heaven, and the wo and shriekings of the damned. Happiness without end, misery without end, are happiness and misery in perfection.

What may help you in this inquiry, as to your own state, is the

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matter of communion with God here in his tabernacle of ordinances. Of which you may observe the three following things.

1. That is our essay-piece for heaven : they whom God admits to communion with him in ordinances, he will never debar from communion with him in heaven : and they that never get communion with him in the lower house, being capable of it, will never get it in heaven.

2. The same kind of qualifications are necessary for the one as for the other. The answer to both questions is one.

3. *Lastly*, Wherefore just as you were living in this world under ordinances, so may you expect your lot in the other world.

Let these things move you therefore seriously to think on this important matter, and the Lord give you understanding in all things.

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THE CITIZEN OF ZION AN UPRIGHT WALKER.

PSALM XV. 2.

*He that walketh uprightly.—*

THIS is the first character of one that shall be an inhabitant of heaven. It is taken from his *walk*, that is, his habitual and ordinary course of life. Men's walk in this world is the sign of the place and state they are making to in another world. His walk is *upright* ; he is upright in heart and life ; or perfect and entire, namely, in the way of gospel perfection.

The text affords this doctrine.

Doctr. It is such as walk uprightly now, that shall dwell in heaven hereafter.

In handling this doctrine, I shall,

I. Unfold this character of walking uprightly.

II. Confirm the point, that such as walk uprightly now, shall dwell in heaven hereafter.

III. Apply the subject.

I. I shall unfold this character. He that shall dwell in heaven hereafter, walks uprightly now. And he that walks uprightly,

1. Is sincere in the frame and disposition of his heart. Hence prays the Psalmist, "Do good, O Lord, unto those that be good, and to them that are upright in their hearts," Psal. cxxv. 4. There cannot be uprightness of life without uprightness of heart. If the cripple is made to go straight, his legs must have a new set ; and if men be brought to walk uprightly, their hearts must get a new set