

fication of the law is not at it; that ye have pardon of sin promised to you on your repentance, and furniture at hand for every thing called for from you. Take it in short, whatever your calling, station or relation be, *Only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ*: And remember the ties and obligations that ye are under, whether more general or more particular; otherwise they shall be remembered to, and against you. Now, the Lord himself enable you, by his all-sufficient grace, to suit all your obligations, to pay all your vows, and to make all your honest resolutions practicable, relating to this *Conversation becoming the gospel of Christ*.

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## A very heavenly SERMON,

*Preached, if not after the communion, yet very pertinent for such an occasion (however it is subjoined to the immediately preceding, because of the affinity of purposes)*

On Philip. 3. 20. *For our Conversation is in Heaven.*

**T**HE life and work of a Christian is a far other thing than, for the most part, it is taken to be; and, no question, were we often thinking on, and studying the qualifications and extent of a Christian conversation, to which believers are called, we would walk with stopped mouths, in the deep sense of our great shortcoming, and there would not be such delusion under the conceit of self-righteousness: But the ignorance of this, makes carnal men think themselves to be something; and makes even believers themselves, that they walk not so humbly, nor press so seriously towards the mark; neither do they propose to themselves, as they ought, a just and perfect pattern to follow.

Amongst other qualifications of a Christian walk and conversation, this is one, and a very considerable one, *That our conversation should be in heaven*: A thing we fear the most part of the Christians of this age scarcely believe, much less endeavour, that they should live with their hearts above in heaven, in the lively expectation of the Saviour's

Saviour's coming; that they should converse in heaven among the spirits of just men made perfect, before they come thither.

The scope of these words is plain. The apostle Paul hath to do with the Christian *Philippians*, who were much tempted, and, no doubt, in some hazard to be led aside both from the faith and from the practice of religion; and the way that he takes to keep them right as to both, is by proposing his own example to them: As if he had said, Ye will readily think, that I should be well acquainted with the way to heaven; now, the way that I take for my justification before God, is not to seek after righteousness by the works of the law, but to be found in Christ covered with his righteousness taken hold of by faith: And, if ye would know what I do in reference to sanctification, this is it, *I forget those things that are behind, and reach forth unto those things that are before, pressing towards the mark, for the prize*; being constantly, as it were, on the spur, that I may attain that which I have not as yet come at, even that perfection of holiness, *that accompanies the resurrection from the dead*. And having laid this before them, as a fair copy and pattern; he improves it, by exhorting them thus, *Brethren, be ye followers together of me*; take the way that I take, both in the matter of faith and of practice: And he gives two reasons why he would have them to do so; the first whereof is taken from the danger that was in following those false teachers, *ver. 18, 19. Many of whom walk so, as they are enemies to the cross of Christ*, that is, enemies to the doctrine of faith in Christ, and to the exercise of it on him, and to the doctrine of his cross, and also to a truly spiritual walk, *whose end is destruction, and whose god is their belly*. The second reason is subjoined in the text, drawn from the great advantage which they should have by following him: *For (saith he) our conversation is in heaven*: This is the spiritual, heavenly and divine walk, wherein he holds forth himself and his fellow-apostles as a pattern to be imitated by them, and so teacheth them their duty. We are not (as if he had said) like those false teachers, *But our conversation is in heaven*; therefore follow us. And he gives an instance of this in the latter part of the verse,

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*From whence* (saith he) *we look for the Saviour*: He is like a person on the watch-tower, that is looking and longing for the coming of a friend; plainly insinuating thereby, that he looks not for much satisfaction in this world, but was earnestly longing for, and in continual expectation of Christ's coming; to which all his hope and expectation of compleat happiness, and of full satisfaction to his soul, was closely confined.

So then, the great thing that he aims at here, is to commend a heavenly conversation to these Christian *Philippians*, and to all that should hear the gospel, and this excellent piece of it amongst the rest.

There are only *two* things shortly to be cleared, before we proceed further; the *first* is, What is meant by *conversation* here? And the reason of the question is, because the word is so very significant in the original, that hardly can we get a word in our language to express it by to the life; 'tis taken from that which signifies a township, corporationship (to speak so) or burgeship: And it implies these *two* things; 1<sup>st</sup>, A title to such and such privileges; as those who were *Romans*, or born citizens of *Rome*, and whoever were made burgessees of it, had such and such privileges attending their burgeship. The 2<sup>d</sup> is a suitableness and peculiar manner of living and carrying according to the laws of that city; as it is often said in the book of the *Acts of the apostles*, *After the manner of the Romans*, who had their own laws, customs, and usages; And, being applied here in a spiritual sense, it supposes, 1. A joint interest with the saints, (or being *fellow-citizens with the saints*; as it is, *Eph. 2. 19.*) who are all burgessees of the heavenly *Jerusalem*: Tho' some of them be, as it were, in the suburbs and lower town, and some in the higher; yet all here below have the same Master and Father with them who are above in heaven. 2. It supposeth a way, walk, and conversation like heaven; to be peculiarly indowed with a nature, inclinations, desires, designs, and qualifications suitable to heaven. We take it here, especially in the latter sense, because *Paul* proposeth himself as a pattern to them to intimate; and it holds out his suitableness to heaven.

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The *second* thing to be cleared a little is, What it is to have a conversation in heaven. I answer, These *two* are in effect one and the same, to have a conversation in heaven, and to be heavenly in our conversation: 'Tis even to have a conversation like that which Christians hope to have in heaven, and such as are bounden, and on their way thitherward, should have. This is a general hint of what a heavenly conversation, or a conversation in heaven, is; and because, in prosecuting the doctrines to be deduced from the words; we will have occasion to explain it more particularly, we shall say no more of it now.

The *Doctrines* that arise from the words are especially these *four*; the *first* whereof is, *That there is a sort of heavenliness in the conversation of Christians, that should be studied by them all without exception, and that lieth on them all as their duty.*

The *second* is, *That this heavenliness of conversation is in a great measure thro' grace attainable; For Paul and other believers attained it. Which is not so to be understood, as if there were an universal suitableness, or a suitableness in all things, in sojourning saints, to glorified saints in heaven; for in heaven they do not eat nor drink, neither are they married nor given in marriage: But 'tis to be understood of a suitableness in respect of qualification, conformity and likeness, in so far as is incumbent to sojourners who are walking thitherward.*

The *third* is, *That it is a peculiar and contradistinguishing mark of a serious and suitably exercised Christian, from all other men in the world, That his conversation is in heaven, while that of others is not.*

The *fourth* is, *That 'tis not an ordinary and common, but a rare thing among professed Christians, to have a conversation in heaven. Many (says the apostle) walk, of whom I have told you, and now tell you weeping, that they are enemies to the cross of Christ; But I and some few others with me have our conversation in heaven: And the many, that he speaks of here, we take to be those, of whom he speaks in the first Chapter, who preached Christ, but out of envy, and pressed holiness (it is like) with more than ordinary fervour, being zealous of the law, and seeking to mix the righteousness of it with the righteousness of Christ in*

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the point of justification; yet they had not their conversation in heaven, as he and some others had.

We shall not prosecute these doctrines distinctly, seeing this is the scope of them all, even to hold forth and commend the necessity and excellency of a heavenly conversation; which we shall, 1. Clear; 2. Confirm; and then, 3. We shall speak to the *Use* of it.

*First* then, for clearing what a heavenly conversation is, Ye would consider, that the apostle speaks of his own and of some few other godly persons their conversation, in opposition to those *many* mentioned by him before: And it imports or implies these *four*; 1. 'Tis to have heaven proposed to ourselves as our great scope and design, next to the glory of God; Even as, to have an earthly conversation, is to mind earthly things, to have a bentness of spirit towards them, and to be wholly or mostly taken up about the things of the world; so, to be heavenly in our conversation, is to have the mind taken up about heaven, prizing, affecting and seeking after heaven and heavenly things, as the word is, Col. 3. 1. *Seek after, or set your affections on those things that are above.* 2. As it imports prizing and affecting of heaven, and of heavenly things; so it imports the taking of that way that leads to the end: And so it is, to be in the use of all means and duties that lead to heaven; *Seek* (saith the apostle, in that Col. 3. 1.) *those things that are above: Set your affections on things above, not on things beneath, or on the earth;* To hold forth the earnestness and ardency of affections that Christians ought to have towards things heavenly, and how very much they should be, with holy care and solicitude, busied in the use of all means, and in the practice of all duties, for the furthering and promoting of an heavenly design: Even as worldly men are taken up and exercised with carking cares, leaving (as it were) no stone unmoved to promote and compass their earthly designs. 3. It imports the having of our conversation like heaven, to be walking like those that are in heaven: Not to be conformed to the world, or like the men of the world, but to be like angels and glorified saints in heaven, according to our capacity; as we are taught to pray, in the Lord's Prayer, *Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven.* 'Tis to have a

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native and kindly suitableness and proportionableness to them that are glorified in heaven. 4. It imports this, that we should be often in heaven as to our thoughts and affections, as to our desires and delights: Tho' we be living on the earth, that we should have, as it were, more than our one half in heaven; as *David* hath it, *Psal.* 25. 1. *Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul*; or, as the word is, *2 Cor.* 5. Tho' we be *absent in the body*, that yet we may be *someway present* in our spirits with the Lord; that we should make frequent visits to heaven; that we should have much to do there, have much traffique, commerce, correspondence and intercourse in and with heaven; that (in a word) we should converse more where we love, than where we live; which is held forth and expressed in the scripture, by *walking with God*, by *having fellowship with him*, by *following hard after him*, and the like: A suitableness to, and a converse in heaven, are mainly meant here.

As for the *second* thing proposed, viz. the *Confirmation* of this, that a Christian should study this heavenliness of conversation; The argument is clear and pressing from *v. 17.* where the apostle exhorts the *Philippians* to be *followers of him*, and here he tells them that *his conversation is in heaven*: And if his conversation was in heaven, then certainly it was their duty, and is ours, to have our conversation in heaven; for he proposeth himself as our pattern in this, and we have it, from the Spirit of God, by him pressed on us as our duty, to imitate him in this thing. It is not so singular a practice, as to be peculiarized, monopoliz'd and engrossed to him alone; but such as was common to him, and other serious Christians, according to their measure; Therefore he says not, *My* conversation, but *Our* conversation; as if he had said, 'Tis mine, and the conversation of others, and of all that follow me; and I would have you in this to follow me, and none other that doth not walk as I do. If it be needful further to confirm it, ye may take this one reason, which hath several arguments in the bosom of it; A Christian's conversation should be heavenly, because *all that a Christian hath is from and in heaven*, and is *someway heavenly*: As will manifestly appear, if ye look, 1. To a Christian's nature,

'tis from heaven ; he is *partaker of the divine nature*, he is *born of God*, he is *of the new Jerusalem* ; his *Father is heavenly*, as he is taught to pray, *Our Father which art in heaven*, or our *heavenly Father* ; to point out, that as we have *born the image of the earthly*, so must we bear the *image of the heavenly*, as it is, *1 Cor. 15. 49*. Where is the elder Brother ? Is he not in the *heavenly places* ? as the apostle tells us, *Eph. 2. 6*. His *treasure is in heaven* ; his *hope is in heaven* ; *heaven* is the city, the mansion, the rest whither he is travelling. Or, if, 2. Ye consider the believer's calling and his obligation : Thereby he is *partaker of the heavenly calling* ; (as it is, *Heb. 2. 1.*) separated from the rest of the world, and therefore ought not to live as the world doth : He hath a *heavenly law* to walk by ; he hath *heavenly promises*, to feed and live upon, and to comfort himself in ; his *happiness is heavenly*, and all the duties that he is called to are so ; of which this is the substance and sum, even to *glorify God*, and to seek to *enjoy him*, and so to shine in his conversation, as others may be provoked to glorify God. Are not his prayers and praises heavenly ? and can a believer possibly go aright about those, and not be heavenly ? To be *translated from darkness to light*, to be a *partaker of the sanctifying Spirit of God*, to be a *new creature*, to have the *Spirit of adoption*, to have *boldness of access to God*, to be an *heir and a joint heir with Christ*, &c. Are not these heavenly ? Or, if, 3. We look to his company, is it not heavenly ? *We are come* (saith the apostle, *Heb. 12.*) *to God the Judge of all*, *to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant*, *to the new Jerusalem*, (which taketh in all the saints in heaven, and the saints on earth) *to an innumerable company of angels*, *to the general assembly of the first-born*, and *to the spirits of just men made perfect*. In a word, whatever we look to, whether to the believer's nature, or to his end, or to the rule of his walk, or to the promises, or to his work and way wherein he is to go ; all is heavenly : Is there not an obliging necessity on the believer, in respect of all these, to study to be heavenly in his conversation ? which is the great thing that the apostle *Paul* presseth on you, and from these words is clearly pressed on all Christians.

The *Uses* are four ; the first whereof serves for *Instruction*

tion and Information to all that bear the Name of Christ. Know from this, what is the high pitch of holiness that ye are called to ; it is even to be heavenly in your conversation. Are there not many who have much need to be instructed in this ? who never walked under the conviction of the necessity of this as a duty ; otherwise, were it possible that the most part of men and women, who are called Christians, and profess a hope of heaven, could or durst live as they do, some in prophanity, riotousness and gluttony ; others in mere civility and moral honesty ; and others in formality and hypocrisy at the best ? Let me ask you in good earnest, Are ye not convinced that this is a duty ? or, do you think that *Paul* was scorning or complimenting, when he exhorts to follow him in this ? or, is it possible that ye can enjoy so many heavenly privileges, or be to any purpose performing heavenly duties, except ye be heavenly in your conversation ? And if so, mistake not Christianity, as if, when ye are exhorted to be Christians, ye were only bidden not to be prophane, or only to go about the external duties of religion, or only to have a sort of merely moral sincerity and seriousness in the performing of them ; which are indeed things good in themselves, and we do not, we dare not disallow them, but rather commend them : But ye are called to more, to much more, and that is, to be *heavenly-minded*, and to *have your conversation in heaven*. I know some are so profane, and others are so misbelievingly discouraged, that, when they hear such doctrine as this, they will be ready, the one sort to say, *We cannot all be saints* ; and the other, *Alas ! we cannot be saints* ; But let all such mouths be stopped ; ye are called and obliged indispensibly to be saints ; and, if ye be not saints here, ye shall never be saints hereafter. There are also some of so distempered dispositions and humours, that they either put off all or most duties, or at least go very heartlessly about them, because they cannot attain perfection in them ; but 'tis clear from the scriptures, that there is a kind of perfection to be win at here in this life, which is even this holiness and heavenliness of conversation : When ye shall be called to a reckoning, God will not ask you so much, whether ye did not drink drunk, whore, swear, lie, cheat, steal, or the like ; as,



whether ye were heavenly in your conversation? And this is not to be aftricted to one, or to some few particular duties; but is the requisite qualification of a Christian in all duties, and in all his actions; whether he be praying, practising, hearing, reading, buying, selling, eating, drinking, &c. or whatever he do and be about, he is to be heavenly in all those.

And if ye ask more particularly, *What that is?* I shall shew you, in what respect a Christian may be said to have and should have his conversation in heaven. And, 1<sup>st</sup>, In respect of the inward holy frame and divine sett of his heart: He should be heavenly in that; free from those distempering passions, that the men of this world are subjected, nay, enslaved unto, and hurried with: He should not have his affections dragging on the earth, nor his delights nor desires taken up with things earthly; but he should be mortified unto, and weaned from all those things: He should not be like unto those who on all occasions are tossed with their humours, and with every wind of temptation; but he should be so calm, composed and sober, settled and fixed in a heavenly temper of spirit, that words of reproach may not much trouble him, nor crosses and afflictions much disquiet him: He should have such composure and sedateness of spirit, that he may be much above the levity and unstayedness that the men of the world are under the power of: And he should endeavour to be defecate and purged from those impure mixtures of self-interests, that are repugnant in worldly men. 2<sup>dly</sup>, In respect of his work, he should and may have his conversation in heaven, and that is, when he is much in the exercise of those graces, and in the practice of those duties, that he is to be taken up with in heaven: To be much in love to God, taken up with delighting in him, much in communion with God, holily impatient to want him or to live without his company: To be much in the study and searching out of his perfections; to be studying to have the heart fixed, as it were a pillar in his house, and not to go out from him: To be much in admiring and adoring the free grace and love of God; and to be in a holy manner ravished with the contemplation of those: To be much in the work of prayer, and much in the work of praise,

praise, saying, *Worthy is the Lamb to receive glory, honour, dominion, &c.* joining with the four beasts and four and twenty elders, saying, *Holy, holy, Lord God Almighty*: To be much in prizing and valuing of God, in setting out and commending him; to be in all duties willing and cheerful, doing God's will cheerfully and with alacrity: To be much in longing for the sabbath to converse more closely with him; longing often for privacy and retirement to pour out the heart before him: And to do all this with holy coveting to do it better, praying *that his will may be done on earth, as it is done in heaven.* 3dly, A believer may be said to have his conversation, and you are called to have yours in heaven, in respect of a heavenly walk, and as having a heavenly impress on all your conversation; to be walking as it were in heaven, and as if *Holiness to the Lord* were written on your foreheads: Which, being very comprehensive, takes in these; 1. To have the heart fixed in meditating on God and his law, on spiritual and heavenly things; to have a sublime and divine strain of mind, not debasing itself to pursue vanities, but kept in a close and constant pursuit after communion with God, and conformity to him: To be in case to say with *David, Psal. 139. When I awake, I am still with thee*; labouring to leave the heart and mind in heaven when ye ly down, and seeking to find it there when ye arise. 2. To have your affections, love, desires and delights in heaven, or heavenly. 3. To have your words favouring of heaven, *minist'ring grace to the hearers*; endeavouring to have your words weighty and grave in the commendation of God and his grace. 4. To have your hearing of the word, and your praying, carrying much of a heavenly stamp and impress on them; hearing, as if God were speaking to you immediately from heaven; and praying, as if ye were even before his throne. 5. In your more common and ordinary conversation, as in your eating and drinking, in your recreating, and in following your lawful callings and employments, even the very coarsest and lowest of them, to propose to yourselves another end than the men of the world do, making that your main end to *glorify God*; and to have such a heavenly and divine way of going about these, as may be convincing, edifying

and gaining of on-lookers; Not to be predominantly influenced by selfish humours, designs or interests, looking only, or mainly, to what may please or profit yourselves; but levelling all at the glory of God, and the edification and good of others, as well as your own. 4thly, We may be said to have our conversation in heaven, when we have a holy a commerce and trading (as it were) with heaven: As a man is said to converse in *France* or *Spain*, when he trades and traffiques there; so, to have converse in heaven, is spiritually to traffique there: To have faith and hope exercised in and about heaven: To send many prayers and desires to heaven, as so many empty vessels; and to be in the lively and longing expectation of their return full and richly loaden: To make many visits (as I said before) to heaven; and to be in all those, neither seldom, nor transiently and at starts only, but to be frequent and more continuing in them: And tho' they should sometimes return either with seeming loss, or with very little gain, yet to keep up the trade and traffique, seeking to make up our loss by a new voyage thither; for the trade is not always (to speak so) alike quick. 5thly, We may be said to converse in heaven, by our abiding (as it were) in heaven; and this is one of the highest steps of a heavenly conversation. If ye shall ask, How it is, that a believer, while on earth, doth or can abide in heaven? I answer, These ways, or in these respects; 1. By having his heart in heaven, where his treasure is; For (as the Lord says) *where a man's treasure is, there is his heart*. The man (as it were) dwells there, and, if at any time he remove a little, he leaves there his great stock, and his heart as a factor; So, tho' the Christian be discoursing, buying, selling, eating, drinking, &c. yet, in all these, his heart may and ought someway to be in heaven. To have his faith in heaven, and, as it were, never to come out of it. 3. To have his love in heaven, folding its two arms about the Lamb and him that sits on the throne; holily loth to have them loosed from those sweet soul-solacing and satisfying embraces. 4. To have his hope in heaven, which is *an anchor cast within the veil*, and makes the soul safe and sure amidst the greatest tempests of outward trouble, as a ship rideth safely when she hath cast anchor

anchor on firm ground, so that there is no fear she will drive. In a word, these *four*, the *heart, faith, hope, and love*, being in heaven, we may say that the man's best half and part is in heaven; his tether-stake is loosed, and much of his tabernacle taken down, and he made in a good measure meet, ready and ripe for his dissolution and for heaven: Thus ye are called and obliged to have your conversation in heaven. 6thly, A believer's conversation may be said to be, and ought to be in heaven, when his contentment, delight and satisfaction are in heaven; when all that he desires, all that he delights in, and on which his soul feeds, and all that he is comforted with, is in heaven, and he hath not a day to do well, nor one comfortable good hour, but that which is given him from heaven: And this is not only to be abiding with, but to be delighting in God; having *the peace of God, that passeth understanding, guarding the heart, and his love shed abroad therein*, and having all that which entertains his life coming from heaven. Thus, *Col. 3. 3.* it is said, that *our life is hid with Christ in God*: So that the believer is affected with nothing, feeds upon, and is satisfied with nothing so much as he is with that which comes from heaven; he awakes, he sleeps, he rests there: This is to live in heaven, and to be heavenly in our conversation; and this is it that ye are called and obliged to, even to have your conversation in heaven, in all these forementioned respects; that as ye believers are of another nature, so ye may be of another and more divine frame of soul in your work and walk, in your thoughts and words, in your outward duties, and in the exercise of inward graces, in your commerce and trading, in your contentment, delight and satisfaction, to be heavenly in all.

And if any shall here say, This is a very hard task: I answer, 1. Can it be hard to be in heaven? Nay, 'tis an ease rather, for *Christ's yoke is easy, and his burden is light*; and inasmuch as our conversation is in heaven, we have so much true spiritual ease and repose of soul: And it is what we leave behind in the world, that makes the difficulty to get our spirits screwed up to heaven, and to be kept there; here lies the difficulty: But, the more the heart and the mind be there, we have really the more ease.

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2. Will ye shift, deny or decline the duty, because 'tis difficult and hard? as indeed it is to corrupt nature: Notwithstanding all the difficulty of it, the apostle *Paul* with his fellows and followers did win to it in a good measure, and we may attain it thro' grace, according to our measure. Is not this the way to heaven, which our Lord calleth *strait*, and which but *few find*? and yet, if ye would try and make proof of it in good earnest, ye would find it to be not so very *strait* or unpassable as ye imagine it to be. It would be found to be waited with such delight, as would much sweeten any hardness in it; and ye would not want an insight in those heavenly mysteries, and the beholding your names written in heaven, and in the Lamb's book of life, nor one hour's feeding upon and being solaced by them, for all the delights of the men of this world: And, since 'tis only hard to corruption, it should be so much the more endeavoured and plyed hard.

The *second Use* serves for *Trial*, that we may know who is a Christian indeed, and a thriving Christian: Or it may serve rather to be an use of *discovery* and of *conviction*; and indeed it may very easily and quickly make discovery of the unsoundness of many, and of the short-coming of all. Need we insist on this? Is it not a truth obvious to all, *viz.* That Christians are called and obliged to be to heavenly in their conversation? Are not these the characters of such a conversation? Nay, is there not yet much more requisite in a Christian, even a divements above what we can express? And if ye be (as ye may be) convinced that this is a truth; then let me in the next place *ask* you, If your conversation be such? Put your own consciences to it; enquire at them, whether your trade be to heaven, whether your peace and joy, your delight and satisfaction be there? Would God ye would essay it, and could upon good ground say, that it is so: But ah! is there any that can say it without some hesitation? Is not the best exceeding defective? Or, if many of you shall say, it is so; what then means your carnalness, your prevailing lusts, distempering humours and passions? What means your so much pleading for self-interests, thus turning (as it were) of the world up-side down for our own particulars? How comes it to pass, that ye who are profane do spend so much of

of your precious time in tippling, and trifle away so much of it unprofitably many other ways? Dare ye say, that ye who walk thus, are indeed followers of the apostle Paul? Or, if ye dare not say, that ye are followers of him in his heavenly conversation; can ye think or expect to dwell with him in heaven? O be not deceived, for God will not be mocked: When ye reflect seriously on yourselves and on your way, will ye not find just ground for being ashamed and confounded before God? Or, is there any of us all, that needs to want an errand to the throne of grace, to confess and crave pardon for our sinful shortcoming in this? I shall only speak a word or two, in further prosecution of this *use*, to you that are *stout-hearted*, and know no changes, that have always a good opinion and a good word to say of yourselves; who are ready to say, that ye have a good meaning, and to think and say that ye loved God all your days; and who at best content yourselves with, and sit down on a form of religion; who never studied to die to the world, and never made it your business in good earnest, to mortify your lusts, and to be holy in the inward frame of your souls: Is this, think ye, to have your conversation in heaven? Would ye know, then, if ever ye have studied Christianity seriously? try it by this, *viz.* whether ye have been heavenly in your conversation; for, however ye judge of yourselves, God will most certainly judge you according to this rule and qualification of a Christian: It is both sad and strange to think, how it comes to pass, that many of you bear and bolster up yourselves with a hope of heaven, and profess that ye have no doubt but you shall come thither, who yet want and are void of this qualification.

I know such will be ready to *object*, Who are they that come this length? To which I shall only *answer*, That as I would be very loth to *quench any smoking flax*, or to *break any bruised reed* (whereof our Lord and Master is very tender) or to cast water of discouragement upon any the least spark or spunk of sincerity, where there is any honest aiming to walk according to this rule; so, I cannot, I dare not but say to others, in the *first* place, Have ye walked under the conviction of this as a duty incumbent on you?

you; and have ye seriously proposed it to yourselves as your great business in the world, to be sincerely aiming at, and endeavouring after this conversation in heaven? Or, have ye not rather had peace (such as it was) when ye said, your prayers, morning and evening, tho' ye did not so much as design or aim at this throughout the day? And can ye with any shadow of reason think, ye have attained it or can attain it, who never seriously proposed this as a rule to yourselves to walk by, nor never had a conscience-disquieting challenge for such neglect and manifest short-coming? 2. What labour are ye at, what pains take ye to prosecute such a design and blessed project as this? It is one thing to pray, to be about external duties of religion, and to be a *Christian in the letter*; and another thing to be in these duties after a heavenly manner, and to be a Christian indeed, a *Christian inwardly and in the spirit, whose praise is not of men, but of God*. Is it really your honest aim, design and endeavour (whatever be the attainment) to be as much heavenly in your conversation, as it is to be civil and formal, or to attend the outward ordinances? I fear many of you cannot say, it is, 3. What weight lies on your spirits, for your short-coming in this? Ye will (belike) say, We are all short; which is a sad truth, for indeed so we are: But, are ye really weighted and grieved for your short-coming in this? Have there been any times taken, to deal purposely with the Lord to remove the earthly mind, and to help to heavenly-mindedness? Have there been challenges and any measure of serious heart-exercise, because of the want of a heavenly mind? and that not only sometimes at the hearing of a sermon, or in time of sickness, or when under some other trouble; but in your more constant and habitual walk? Is it one of the great things for which ye blame and find fault with yourselves before God? And tho' your outside and visible conversation be blameless; yet while you look on the carnalness and earthliness of your mind, and on the want of this divine and heavenly frame of soul, it makes you hang the head, mars your boldness, and (as it were) lays your feathers; because, do what ye can, your heart will not abide in heaven? If it be thus, it is a token for good, and some ground of peace;

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but O how rare is this? Many of you, belike, have often overly prayed, *Forgive us our sins*; who never took with; nor prayed for the pardon of this sin; but have lyen down at night, and risen up in the morning, having your hearts plunged and puddled in the world, without once minding heaven in earnest, and yet have never been challenged for it: O sad state!

The *third Use* serves to *reprove* and *expostulate* for this unworthy carriage; for having either nothing at all, or but very little of a conversation in heaven: We take it for granted, that many of us are far from it, and that all of us are little in it, but very few even of the best are daily and constantly conversing in heaven; alas! 'tis but now and then, with many sad interruptions. For quickning this reproof and expostulation a little, let me propose these few *Queries* to you; and, in the *first* place, Do ye not know that the neglect of this is a sin and the breach of a command, *Be ye followers of me*? 2. Is not this an excellent duty and royal privilege, to be admitted to converse in heaven? and therefore the neglect of it must not only be a sin, but a great sin, even a trampling on the grace of God, a slighting of heaven, and of a most noble privilege and dignity. 3. Think ye heaven to be of great worth? if so, must not conversing in heaven be of much worth? will ye never so much as once go to see the house, wherein ye say ye are to dwell? O how unsuitable a thing is it, that those who are but *days-men* here, should sit down and settle on the earth, without minding heaven; and be so confined within time, as not seriously to mind eternity! 4. How can ye come before God with confidence and boldness, who do not endeavour thus to walk with him? Can ye say with holy boldness, *Our Father which art in heaven*, whose conversation is not heavenly? Can ye pray for holiness, and say these words, *Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven*, who never studied to be heavenly in any duty that ye put hand to? But, 5. and above all, I would ask you, Can ye hope to die comfortably, nay, can ye hope to die in safety as to your souls, who know not heaven, nor what is there, nor what is the way to it? It gives a man confidence and comfort at death, that he hath conversed in heaven in his lifetime: Such a man hath  
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## **THE**      *The Necessity and Excellency*

but little to do, when he comes to die; he knows the way, and is not afraid; he knows the company, and longs to be with them; he knows the privileges, and longs for the full enjoyment of them: He hath little here, his treasure is above in heaven, and his heart, faith, love, and hope are there; his anchor is cast within the vail, and he would fain be ashore: Sure, this is the believer's both duty and privilege. Do not think, that it is only called for from some more than ordinary Christians, and who have nothing else to do: The matter is not so; it is most certainly a duty, to which ye are all called that have a mind to land fairly in heaven, when ye come off the troublesom, tossing and tempestuous sea of this world.

Now therefore, in the *last* room (as the *fourth Use* of the doctrine) I *exhort, beseech* and *obtest*, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, all of you that lay any claim to the hope of heaven, that ye would, and more than ever, study to have your conversation in heaven; O be followers of *Paul* and of his fellows in this thing: Need we adduce any motives to press this? Is not the duty clear? And is it not a most excellent duty, a most desirable qualification of a Christian walk? Is not heaven transcendently excellent? And is it not excellent to be heavenly-minded, and conversant in heaven? Wherein may we expect to prevail with you, if not in bringing you to heaven? What is the thing that should sweeten the study of holiness to you? Is it not this, even that, by having your conversation in heaven, ye come thither? Those who are now in heaven, think it a great motive; and, if it be not a motive to you, ye will one day curse yourselves that ye neglected it: Study it therefore in due time; this is the way to be free of the incumbrances of an evil world: There is no hazard of this estate its being forfeited or sequestred, there are no plundrings nor quarterings here, no poverty nor pain, nor any sad evil occurrent here. O what a desirable life is it to be above all those things! And indeed, in so far as your conversation is heavenly, in so far ye are above them, and live the life of angels.

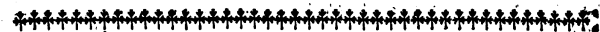
It is like ye will ask, What are the means or steps by which we may win in and ascend to this heavenliness of conversation? which is indeed a very suitable question, and

and would God we were serious in proposing of it, and were convinced of the necessity of it: However, let such as would fain be at it, know, 1. That they must be much mortified and denied to creature-comforts; therefore, Col. 3. these two are opposed, *Seek those things which are above, set your affections on things in heaven, and not on things of the earth.* To go both up and down at once, is impossible: If ye would be heavenly in your conversation, seek to have the world little and low in your estimation; to be not only free from the sinful intanglements of it, but to be mortified to things lawful. I press you not to negligence in your honest and lawful callings, far less to lay them aside, but to a heavenly-mindedness and holy deniedness in your diligence: *Use the things of this world, as not abusing them,* as not being taken with them, nor glued to them. The minding of earthly things too much, clogs and keeps mens hearts, that they do not mount up to heaven: It is impossible, while the heart is surfeited with the cares of this life, that it can thus soar aloft. And therefore, 2. Those that would be heavenly in their conversation, must lay up their treasure in heaven; *for, where the treasure is, there will the heart be also.* Were ye under the deep and due conviction of the vanity of earthly things, and of the excellency of heaven and heavenly things, and laying your reckoning soberly and seriously, that heaven ye must have, it would be much more easy to screw up your affections to it: As, where mens stock and treasure is, there is their heart; even so, were your great stock and treasure in heaven, your heart would certainly be there; your hope, your love and delight would be there: But your seeking after contentment and satisfaction in earthly vanities, where it cannot be found, keeps your heart out of heaven. 3. Be much in the duty of meditation and contemplation of heavenly things: This is (as it were) the great wheel and first mover of the clock, to have the mind heavenly, often conversing in heaven, and often thinking of it, and often recounting the blessed advantages, the glorious and great happiness that are there, even till *your meditation of God be made sweet,* and till your delight in him, thereby stirred up and strengthened, make a heavenly conversation: For little such medita-

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tion makes little heavenly-mindedness; and, when the mind is not on heaven, something that is worse comes in the place of it. Ye that know the bent and inclination of your own minds to be naturally downward, and how natively (to speak so) it runs on vanities; and how difficult it is to keep it, but amongst two or three sentences, fixed on heavenly things; and how preternatural a motion it is (as it were) to make it ascend and mount upward, will easily assent to the truth of this. It is an excellent word that *David* hath, *Psal.* 139. *When I awake I am still with thee.* 4. We commend this to you (hinted at before) that ye would be much in trading and trafficking with heaven; to be often and serious in prayer, frequently sending up desires thither, and bringing thence returns of prayer in great measures of grace; catching hold of, and gripping at somewhat above you, whereby ye may be helped up that high and holy hill: *It transforms into the same image from glory to glory*, to be keeping love to Christ fresh, to have hope as an anchor cast within the vail. In a word, love to Christ, and delight in him, being; as a considerable part, so also the result of holiness; there must be a study of holiness in all the parts of it, of holiness in all manner of conversation, and a heavenly frame aimed at, and endeavoured in all duties, and in all the steps of our walk and conversation, in order to the keeping in, cherishing and increasing of love to, and delight in him; and often thinking on that which helps to it, *viz. Let thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven*; a word often in the mouths of many, but little in their hearts. And O how lamentably unlike are the practices of many of you to it! We may indeed blush and think shame to speak, and you may think shame to hear of having a conversation in heaven, there being so little of it amongst us: But we must speak of it, and ye must hear it spoken of; since it is a part, and a great part of our duty, and will be a part, and a great part of our reckoning: And we lay and leave it upon you from the Lord, to be studied by you. Do not think that ye shall ever have your conversation in heaven afterward; who have not your conversation in heaven here: Many of you that have a fair profession of religion, and seem to come near to that harbour of rest, and yet never enter

enter into it, are like to a ship that comes, as it were, with up-sails, very near the port, and is unexpectedly blown back to the sea again; whereas the believer, who has his anchor cast on firm and sure ground within the vail, is enabled to endure tossing, being like a right ship, that is able to ride out the storm, and to stem the port: His treasure is in heaven, and there is a sure and indissoluble knot cast betwixt heaven, where his treasure is, and his heart. Now, from all this judge, what a mighty prejudice it is to be earthly-minded, and to slight this walk with God, and conversation in heaven: And who are they that dare offer or presume to come before God the righteous Judge of heaven and earth, in whose sight the very heavens are not pure, to abide his trial, who have been puddling all their days in the world, never once seriously and suitably minding a conversation in heaven? O let the consideration of eternal happiness on the one hand, and of eternal misery on the other, provoke you, and necessitate you all to study in good earnest to have your conversation in heaven. And ye believers in Christ, and children of light, walk in the light, suitably to your heavenly Father, and to the hope of your heavenly inheritance: O be more conversant in heaven, before ye come to it, and where ye shall be by and by for evermore.



## A Preparation-Sermon for the Communion;

On Isa. 55. 1, 2, 3. — *I will make an everlasting Covenant with you, even the sure Mercies of David.*

**I**T is hard to conceive or express, whether the things which the gospel offereth be the most large, or the terms on which they are offered be the most free. There is that, no doubt, in both together, which may make the beholder stay and wonder. Among many excellent offers of the gospel, that which is here, is one very full and free: Would to God we could look on it suitably. But, alas! we may fear, that we shall rather leave the sweet words with a vail cast over the beauty, splendor and lustre