

and the enjoyments of the world: 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5, 'Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.' Prayer blesseth all our enjoyments to us.

SERMON XV.

For our conversation is in heaven.—PHIL. iii. 20.

HERE is the opposite carriage of sound believers, and the reason of it. The false christians minded earthly things, and the true christians had their conversation in heaven. The people of God and the people of the world are of divers. dispositions; the one are under the power and influence of the wisdom of the flesh, and the other are under the government of a heavenly mind. The natural life in them is overruled by grace. Now our way should be with the wise above; not with the worldly wise who mind earthly things, but with the godly wise whose conversation is in heaven.

The word *πολίτευμα*, which we translate 'conversation,' noteth our manner of living as burghers and citizens, not of earth, but of heaven; that is the city where we are free, and have the right of citizens, though we dwell on earth. Many that dwelt out of the city of Rome had the *jus civitatis Romanæ*, the privileges of the city of Rome belonging to them; as the privilege of being a free man of Rome belonged to one that lived in Judea: Acts xxii. 28, 'And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, I was free born.' So we, though we are not in heaven, yet carry ourselves as belonging to heaven.

Doct. That a good christian should behave himself as a denizen of the heavenly city. I shall show you—(1.) What it is; (2.) Why.

I. What. I will open that in these considerations—

1. That heaven is a city. A city is taken for three things—

[1.] A place fit for a comfortable and safe habitation.

[2.] For a political society and community living in that place, or at least belonging to it.

[3.] For the condition and estate belonging to that place and community. All these respects are proper here.

[1.] A city is put for a place or habitation, consisting of many houses; for multitudes and vicinity of buildings make a city in this sense. So is heaven a city, a place fitted and furnished from the creation of the world to be the habitation of the blessed; and so it is called 'a city which hath foundations,' Heb. xii. 10, because it standeth on the eternal love of God, Mat. xxv. 34, the everlasting merit of Christ, Heb. ix. 12, and his unchangeable covenant: 1 Peter i. 15, 'The word of God endureth for ever, and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.' The best things in the world stand upon an earthly foundation, which soon mouldereth away and faileth. We and all things

about us are subject to great uncertainties. If a man be but two or three years absent from an earthly city, he will see a new face of things when he cometh again, all things are altered and changed from what he left them; but in heaven there is the same face of things to all eternity. Here we have no *μένουσαν πόλιν*, 'no abiding city,' Heb. xii. 14. Again, this city is said to be 'prepared for us,' Heb. xi. 16. It is fitted by the goodness and love of God. He had not done enough to answer his love in the covenant if he had not prepared a better place than the world to be the mansion and residence of his people. 'To be a God to any is to be an infinite and eternal benefactor. Our Saviour proveth the resurrection from these words, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living,' Mat. xxii. 32.

[2.] Sometimes it is taken for a political society and community, or a corporation under one magistracy or governing power, and ruled by the same laws, and enjoying the same common privileges and immunities. So it is said, Eph. ii. 19, 'Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;' Heb. xii. 22, 23, 'Ye are come to Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.' This is a part of our happiness, that we and the holy angels and blessed saints make up but one community that shall for ever serve and praise the Lord.

[3.] It is taken for the condition and estate of those societies which all the members enjoy there, and the same common privileges; the estate is glorious and everlasting. In the city of God there are eternal honours, riches, and pleasures, peace, safety, full and enduring joy; nothing is wanting which the heart of man can desire; the estate is answerable to the place and company, full and perfect happiness. Well, then, here are all things which may be comprised in the name of a city; here is habitation, society, and estate. The habitation is heaven; the society, saints and angels; the estate, perfect peace and eternal happiness, none of which can be found in the world. It is true they that are in their pilgrimage are not admitted to the full of these privileges till they come home to their own city and country. We are not yet capable of reigning with God, and being admitted into his immediate presence. But though the possession of our full privileges be deferred, with patience we must wait for it; partly because we have a title by God's grant; the new covenant is the charter of this corporation, and it will in time bring us to heaven, as it hath done others before us; partly because if the time of our pilgrimage seem long and tedious, it will shortly expire, and then beginneth our everlasting rest; partly because, besides actual right to eternal life, we have here some first-fruits of this blessed estate. That part above have the full possession of it, but we have the first-fruits; we have justification, and immunity from God's wrath and curse: Rom. viii. 33, 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.' We have adoption: Eph. i. 5, 'Having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ.' Sanctification: Eph. v. 25, 26, 'Christ

hath loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify it.' Peace of conscience : Rom. v. 1, ' Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.' The use of ordinances, which may put us in mind, and quicken us to seek after the country to which we do belong. So that this is the city of God.

2. That believers have a right to the heavenly city. By nature we are of another corporation, of the earthly society, not belonging to the holy city of God, but to the kingdom of Satan, strangers to the commonwealth of Israel and the city of God : Col. i. 12, 13, ' Who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light ; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.' It was the mercy of God to translate us into another state and society of men. He found us unmeet, as being under the curse and power of Satan, dead in trespasses and sins ; but he drew us out of this corrupt estate, changing our hearts, and pardoning our sins, and by a strong hand rescuing us from the power of the devil, that he might put us under the blessed government of Christ ; and then ' we are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God,' Eph. ii. 19 ; and Heb. xii. 22, ' We are now come to the city of the living God.' While we are in the way, as soon as converted, upon our sincere faith in Christ we are admitted and incorporated into this blessed city. Not only at last in the close of our days, but now when our hearts are turned to the Lord : Eph. ii. 6, ' He hath made us sit together with him in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.' We have a right, though not full possession. Christ is entered, and sat down as head of all the faithful.

3. Being made burgesses of heaven, our manner of living must be suitable ; partly because it is the wisdom of God to place all things in their proper places. As in nature, so in a way of grace ; light bodies are uppermost and heavy bodies below ; so also in a way of grace. Sometimes we read that heaven and glory is prepared for us, Mat. xxv. 34 ; and sometimes that we are prepared for heaven and glory ; Rom. ix. 23, ' Vessels of mercy which he hath afore prepared unto glory.' There must be a suitableness between the receiver and the thing received, and therefore we must be made meet for this blessed estate. From heaven we received our first spiritual being, and there is the final consummation of it, and there we must converse, and thither we must tend. And partly out of gratitude on our part. Our lives must suit and agree with our heavenly calling : 1 Thes. ii. 12, ' Walk worthy of God, who hath called you to his kingdom and glory.' We must live as those that have a present right, and one day shall have full possession. Shall God advance us to such an estate, and shall we lie grovelling in the dirt, as if we had not such high and blessed hopes, and slight all this mercy and goodness ?

4. This suitable manner of living consists partly—(1.) In the exercise of those graces which belong to this blessed estate ; (2.) In the constant use of the means, whereby we may attain it ; (3.) In such a course of living as suiteth with the properties of it.

[1.] There are certain graces which belong to it, which are given to us for that end and purpose. It is an unseen felicity, and therefore requireth faith to believe it. It is a future felicity, and therefore re-

quires hope to expect it. It is our chief felicity, and therefore requires love to desire it.

(1.) We must certainly believe this blessed estate in the world to come. Faith is at the bottom of all, and therefore deal seriously with your hearts: John xi. 26, 'Believest thou this?' Most men here talk of it; take it up from the common report by a human credulity, but are not settled in the firm belief of it by the illumination of the Holy Spirit: Eph. i. 17, 18, 'That the Father of glory may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.' This faith goeth before affection, and affection to heavenly things before mortification to earthly things: Heb. xi. 13, '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 they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.' Are you verily persuaded that there is eternity at the back of time? that God intends such great things for penitent believers? Surely men's boldness in sinning and coldness in holy duties showeth their faith is not firm and sound. Sense telleth you that here is no abiding city, for we have seen the ruin of so many castles, palaces, cities, states, and kingdoms, which formerly flourished in great splendour, power, and strength, that now lie in the dust and do not appear. We need not tell you, you must die; graves and skulls show you that; but faith only can tell us there is an abiding city to come, and we must believe it before we can seek after it. Therefore can you depend upon Christ's fidelity and the truth of his promises for the happiness of the world to come? Why, then, if you believe as christians, do not live as infidels. If heaven be not a dream, let not your godliness be but a vain show. We have Christ's word for the reality of it; and for his fidelity, we may be assured that he would not delude us with vain hopes: John xiv. 2, 'In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you.' Wherefore should God flatter a worm, or what need he to court creatures into an imaginary happiness? Surely there is a quiet resting-place prepared for saints in the heavens. God never told us of anything but it came to pass. He told the old world of a flood which should drown the ungodly, and that was a thing as much unseen as heaven and hell is by us: Heb. xi. 7, 'By faith, Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.' Those that accepted his warning fared well, and others were drowned in the flood. He told the old patriarchs of Christ's coming in the flesh; and rather than go back from his word, the Son of God must come and die. God, that hath kept touch with the world hitherto, will not fail at last. Thus should you rouse up a languid and drowsy faith.

(2.) We must look for this blessed estate by hope, which is acted by serious and heart-warming thoughts. A believer is not already in heaven, but his better part is there; his heart and mind are there, and he expects one day to be there glorified: Titus ii. 13, 'Looking for the blessed hope;' Jude 21, 'Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life;' and here in the text, 'From whence we look for a saviour.'

Surely they whose minds and thoughts are strangers to heaven do not live in the world as if they were in heaven. Can a man look for any great benefit, and not think of it? It is against the common experience of mankind. If you were adopted to a rich inheritance, would you not think of it? And do they expect such a glorious estate that never look up all the week long, or have such slight thoughts as rather damp and put out this holy fire than kindle it and keep it alive in you; rather shun all sober and lively thoughts of the life to come, lest they should awaken them out of their security, and that dull form of religiousness wherein they please themselves? Oh, therefore think often and much of that glorious estate, when you shall enjoy the endless sight and love of God, and live with all his blessed ones, and praise and serve him to all eternity. Can you travel one whole day toward such a city, and never think of the place you are going to? Is it your drift to get home, and shall home be never seriously thought of? Have we thoughts enough and to spare for other things, and none for Christ and heaven? If the carnal are delighted in minding earthly things, the souls of the godly should much more be heavenly. Surely if your conversations be in heaven, you would oftener think of it. The great instrument of the soul, next to sound belief, is serious consideration, not cursory and heartless thoughts, but such as are pressing, deep, and ponderous.

(3.) Love bends our desires that way, as well as hope sendeth our thoughts thither. And besides looking, there must be longing; and where the treasure is, there will the heart be also. If you have laid up treasure in heaven, you will be there in heart and mind, in affection and thoughts: Col. iii. 2, 'Set your affections on things above, and not on things that are on earth.' That place is your home where you desire to be. If heaven be your home, you still groan and long to be there. But it is the world that is your home, and heaven a strange place, when you are loath to go out of the one, or get into the other. Yea, believers, such as love the world, they do not prize it, they do not love it; but they that believe it long after the enjoyment of this city more than for anything in the world. Have you the heart of christians, and love the world more than heaven? Is any happiness like the enjoyment of God? or do you meet with any such company upon earth as you shall have in heaven? Here we live mixed with hypocrites and unbelievers, as the wheat with the chaff, obnoxious to the calamities of the earthly life; and shall not all this wean us from a vain and vexatious world, that we may long to be at home? What is it tempts you, maketh your desires so cold? Is it the enjoyment of a plentiful portion in the world? It is a curse to be 'written in the earth,' Jer. xvii. 13, as it is our felicity and joy to have our 'names written in heaven,' Luke x. 20. Which city is best in your account, and where lieth your portion, in the fruition of the world or the vision of God? Ps. xvii. 14, 15, 'From men which are thy hand, O Lord; from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose bellies thou fillest with thy hid treasure: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes. As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.' Surely it is not the partial fruition of God maketh you so loath to depart, for those kind of enjoyments do not divert you from God, but draw you

to him ; having a taste, you will long for more. Earth is not heaven when it is at best, nor can you find Mount Sion or the city of the living God in the wilderness. Oh, therefore, if you have any love to God, long for heaven, where you have most of God. Here you have his presence with you, but you are absent from him : 2 Cor. v. 8, ' We are willing rather to be absent from the body, that we may be present with the Lord.'

[2.] In the constant use of the means whereby we may attain it. There is no coming to the end of the journey but by the way, nor obtaining the happiness but by the means. The great difficulty of a christian lieth not so much in a respect to the end as to the means. There is some difficulty about the end, to convince men of an unseen felicity, that they may believe it and accept it as their happiness, look and long for it as such a happiness doth require. But we have a quick ear for offers of happiness, whilst usually we snuff at the conditions of duty and obedience as troublesome. Paul had a great desire of the happiness, yet he doth not stick at the means : ' If by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead,' Phil. iii. 11. All would be blessed, but they do not come to this resolution, ' If by any means.' Balaam could say, Num. xxiii. 10, ' Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his ;' but he loved the wages of unrighteousness. If wicked men are said to despise eternal happiness, it is not as happiness, nor eternal ; they like happiness well enough, for all that love themselves would be happy ; nor as eternal, for man, that hath lost the right object of his desires, hath not lost the vastness of them ; he would be happy for ever ; but it is in conjunction with the means that they dislike it. Thus the ' Israelites despised the pleasant land, and murmured in their tents,' Ps. cvi. 24, 25. What ailed them ? The land was a good land, flowing with milk and honey. Ay ! but the spies had told them of the giantly strength and stature of the men. Heaven is a good place, but the strictness of holy walking is disliked. We must submit to use all holy means to obtain it. What are they ? We do not now speak of the title, but the conversation : Rom. ii. 7, ' To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life.' When we walk in God's way, when our actions plainly tend to heaven. The believers of the old testament ' declared plainly that they sought a country,' Heb. xi. 14. How ? By resolving to seek till they find ; by being content to be pilgrims in the world, and not giving over till they saw some place of eternal rest. This is the fault of most christians, their actions do not declare plainly that they are for God and heaven, nor doth the course of their lives show it. If they are tending thither, then two things will show it—continuance, and patient continuance, in well-doing.

(1.) Continuance. When we walk in all holy conversation and godliness. Men's end is seen in their constant course, when in all their actions they study to please God. They believe there is such an estate, and they know the excellency and glory thereof, and therefore would not for all the world weaken their hopes, or darken and cloud their interest, nor offend that God from whom they expect it : 1 Cor. xv. 58, ' Always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you

know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.' A christian aimeth at heaven in all his business, civil and sacred: Acts xxiv. 15, 16, 'And have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.' He goeth about his earthly business with a heavenly mind; in his attendance upon God in the ordinances: Acts xxvi. 6, 7, 'And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come.' It is to get more of God and heaven into his heart; more of the first-fruits, more of his title and interest, more preparation of heart, new excitement of affections to God and heaven. He heareth that his soul may live; he prayeth that he may live; receiveth that he may take these pledges of heaven out of God's hand. He heareth the word, because there are the promises of eternal life, or directions in the way that leadeth thither. He prayeth, that he may come as near as he can to his Father, and have as much familiarity with him as a soul dwelling in flesh possibly can have. He cometh into the assemblies of God's people, because they are the favourites of heaven.

(2.) Patient continuance, whatever temptations he meeteth with to the contrary: Rom. viii. 18, 'But I reckon that the sufferings of the present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us;' 2 Cor. iv. 17, 'For our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' These things do not greatly move him. It is for heaven, so that a christian is still travelling to God, improving all business and all conditions to this end, comforting himself with these hopes; so that he is either living for heaven in seeking it, or upon heaven by the joy and hope he deriveth from thence; he is still acting for this blessedness, or encouraging himself by this blessedness, because he expecteth one day to be glorified with God; thence he fetches his solaces and supports. This carriage is not by fits, but it is their constant course: 'Their conversation is in heaven.'

[3.] The course of our living must suit with the properties of this happy estate. (1.) It is a great happiness; (2.) It is a pure happiness; (3.) A happiness that lieth in heaven.

(1.) It is a great happiness, and therefore must not be slightly sought after. No slight thing will become God and heaven; all zeal and diligence is necessary to be exercised. There must be seeking: Col. iii. 1, 'Seek things above;' Heb. xi. 14, 'They seek a country.' Working: Phil. ii. 12, 'Work out your salvation.' Labouring; there must be diligence to get what we seek: John vi. 27, 'Labour for the meat that endures.' Watching, Luke xxi. 36. Striving: Luke xiii. 24, 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate.' Pressing hard: Phil. iii. 14, 'I press toward the mark.' We seek it because we want it; here we have it not. We work and labour for it, because heaven will not come with a cold wish, or a few faint and feeble or heartless endeavours. Is this becoming everlasting glory? Is this all we do for God and heaven? We watch, that we may keep up our heavenly affections, and be found in a constant preparation at Christ's coming: 2 Peter iii.

14 'Give all diligence, that you may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.' We strive because we meet with difficulties within and without; without are temptations, and within are corruptions. And we press forward that every day we may be a step nearer. The life of a christian is a continual motion and nearer approach to the heavenly city. If we do thus, this is to have our conversation in heaven, when the thoughts and hopes put life and vigour into our graces and duties.

2. It is a pure happiness, not a Turkish paradise, but an immaculate and sinless estate; to see God and be like him. Therefore then our conversation is in heaven, when we purify ourselves yet more and more: 1 John iii. 2, 3, 'Behold, now we are the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself as he is pure.' We expect to be presented faultless before the presence of his glory, Jude 24. Therefore now we strive every day more to be without blame before him in love. Christians have a carnal notion of heaven if they look only upon it as a state of personal contentment. No; it is not that alone, but a state of exact conformity to God; and the more pure and holy you are, the more heaven-like are your conversations; as heaven is the perfecting of that life which is begun here by the Spirit.

3. It is a heavenly happiness; and therefore true believers should be drawing off their hearts from earthly things, that they may wholly breathe and aspire after heavenly things. Worldly and sensual inclinations turn us to another happiness, and make the heart dead and senseless. We seek our heaven and happiness here in the world, rather than in the salvation of the blessed: Luke xvi. 25, 'Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things.' Because he lived a life of pomp and ease; he was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. If we enlarge ourselves in this kind of life, we discharge God from giving us any other happiness. You shall have riches, you shall have honours, because you do so greedily seek after them, but you shall have no more. Sure it is the mortified, self-denying conversation that becometh the citizens of heaven; for they do not seek for their happiness here, but elsewhere: 1 Peter ii. 11, 'I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.' The citizens of this world must make a fair show in the flesh, to be somebody here, have such provision for their sensuality, or they are comfortless; but the citizens of the other world seek to excel in grace, to be filled with the wisdom that is from above, to entertain communion with God, to get more assurance of his love; for this manner of living suiteth with their hopes. They mortify their members which are upon earth, but seek to cherish and increase the graces of the Spirit which come from God, and lead them to God.

Reasons why.

1. They are made for eternity, and God has given them an immortal spirit that will never perish; and therefore they cannot be satisfied with things that perish in the using. An immortal soul cannot be contented with a mortal happiness: Eccles. xii. 7, 'Then shall the dust return

to the earth as it was, and the spirit unto God that gave it.' The make and constitution of man showeth the estate he was made for. Some things were made for heaven and not for earth, as the angels, who are pure spirits; and some things for earth and not for heaven, as the beasts, who have bodies, but a material spirit. Some things were made both for earth and heaven, as man, who hath a mortal body and an immortal spirit. He was made for earth, the place of bodies, in his passage; for heaven as his home, which is the region of spirits. Now the children of God observe the cause for which they were made, and for which they were sent into the world; and therefore regard present things only in their passage, and prepare themselves for the upper place of their abode. The whole drift of their conversation tends that way; that is the estate most in the eye of their faith, hope, and love; they believe it, look and long for it, and prepare for it.

2. They are new made or born again, and the tendency of the life of grace is to God and heaven: 2 Peter i. 4, 'Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruptions that are in the world through lust.' It is the divine Spirit which is the true Spirit, which carrieth them so far above the world to things to come. The sanctifying Spirit formeth us for this very thing: 2 Cor. v. 5, 'Now he that hath wrought us to this self-same thing is God, who also hath given us the earnest of the Spirit.' He frameth and fitteth men in this life for a state of glory. The heart of a christian is more and more suited to the happiness promised in the gospel; and as they are fitted for it, so they are inclined to it. A christian is born from above, and seeks to get thither. As all things tend to the place of their original, or have a propensity to the place whence they came, as fire and air work upward—you cannot keep them down—so the new nature has a new tendency. Fishes desire to be in the water, and fowls in the air; they have a peculiar nature to carry them to those places. They that have an earthly and worldly nature are all for the world, and relish nothing but the pleasures of the world. Our souls naturally are inclined to earthly things, but being renewed, have a tendency to heavenly things. Love, which is the heart of the new creature, inclines us to be with God and Christ: Phil. i. 23, 'Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ;' 1 Thes. iv. 17, 'And so shall we ever be with the Lord;' Col. iii. 1, 'If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, &c. So it inclines us to perfect grace, and freedom from sin, and full likeness to God, never to dishonour God more; as little seeds by degrees work through the thick clods of earth, and grow up to stalk and flower. In short, the illuminate soul can only discern these things; the sanctified soul is inclined to them.

3. There is no condition of rest and tranquillity here in the world; so that a christian is in effect driven hence by the relics of sin, multitude of temptations, manifold afflictions. Though the new nature be strongly inclined to God and heavenly things, the old corrupt nature, having the advantage of things present, would sorely tempt us from him. Therefore God ordereth our condition so that we find little else but occasions of groaning in the world. Within we find the relics of sin, and that maketh us long and wait. If any had cause to complain

of afflictions, Paul much more ; yet he complains not of that, but of indwelling sin : Rom. vii. 24, 'O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?' A very beast driven to a place where there is neither ease nor rest will groan under it ; but yet temptations on every side molest us and trouble us, and afflictions also. How soon and how often is our worldly happiness interrupted, even then when we think ourselves past all hazards and fears of change ! Ps. xxx. 6, 7, 'In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong ; thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.' No man ever slept upon a carnal pillow but had his rest disturbed before his nap was over. It is tedious for us to think of such a mutable condition ; but let us look upon God's design in it. God ordereth it that we may always think of our remove, and prepare ourselves to rest in our proper place.

Use 1. To press us to this constant and earnest pursuit after heavenly things. Let thoughts, conferences, discourses, actions still show that you are for God and heaven. When you are alone, oh, think of heaven, where your God and Christ is, and where you in a little time hope to be. When you are in company, comfort one another, warm one another with discourses of heaven : 'With these words,' saith the apostle. When you are doing anything for God, let heaven put life into your endeavours ; doing anything in the world, let heaven regulate and measure your actions ; do it so as you may be true to your great end. When you are suffering anything, loss of estate, credit, and esteem in the world, if it be for heaven, it may be the better borne : I have a better and a more enduring substance. Look not to the state in which you are, but that into which you are a-going. In short, be sure you do not want this evidence that your conversation is in heaven.

Motives to enforce it.

1. You are bound to it by oath in baptism : Col. iii. 1, 'If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above.' You are bound to such a heavenly life ; you are planted into the likeness of Christ's death and resurrection. The sacramental resurrection enforceth the obligation ; the real resurrection enforceth the effect.

2. The more heavenly you are in your lives, your right is the more evident, and you are more ready for possession. You are in the next meetness : Col. i. 12, 'Who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.' A man reconciled to God and sanctified is in a remote meetness ; but the heavenly-minded, the heavenly walkers, are in the next preparation. The first meetness gives us a right, the next meetness a ripeness, like a shock of corn that comes in in its season.

3. This heavenly conversation doth more honour God in the world ; when we carry ourselves as men of another world, we do the better convince them of the reality of our profession and hopes. By your serious diligence you condemn the world : Heb. xi. 7, 'Noah condemned the world.' Make the world wonder : 1 Peter iv. 4, 'They think it strange you run not with them into the same excess of riot.' Awaken the world to think of God : 2 Thes. i. 11, 12, 'Wherefore we pray always for you, that God would count you worthy of his calling, and fulfil all

the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power : that the name of the Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you.' Christ is glorified and you rewarded.

But what is this heavenly conversation ? When we so believe as to prize it, so prize it as to seek after it in the first place.

[1.] Do we believe it ? Surely they that are drowned in the cares of the world and voluptuous living have no sense of the world to come. That is known by mortification rather than confident presumption : 1 John v. 4, 5, ' And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God ? '

[2.] Do we prize and esteem it ? for nothing is sought and laboured for but what is prized. Do we prize it, not with a speculative, but practical esteem ? Rom. ii. 18, ' Thou approvest the things that are excellent.' The practical esteem is that which draweth our hearts. Is it our treasure ? Mat. vi. 19, ' Lay up treasure in heaven.' Do you esteem it comparatively above all other things ? Mat. xiii. 45, 46, ' Sell all to buy the pearl of great price.' All is nothing in comparison of this blessed estate. Do you esteem it copulatively, cross and crown, means and end ? Ps. cvi. 24, ' They despised the pleasant land, and believed not his word ; ' Phil. iii. 11, ' If by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead.'

[3.] Do you seek it ? What do you do for it ? Our great business in this life is seeking after heaven. Many would be glad their souls might be saved at last, but we cannot believe they are in earnest. Where is that seeking, watching, striving, working, that serious diligence, those lively endeavours, that conscionable care for obtaining so great a benefit ? What ! seek it, and have no heart to pray for it, hear and meditate of it ? Alas ! for seeking, watching, working, striving, men are as far from these as they are like to be from heaven itself.

[4.] Do you seek it in the first place, so that all other works and labours are but by the by and subordinate to this ? Alas ! how can you say so, when religion is looked upon by the by, and you are out of your element when you are employed in the duties of it ? You cannot endure to be long held to prayer, or hearing the word ; your hearts are not suited to these things.

SERMON XVI.

From whence also we look for our Saviour and Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ.—PHIL. iii. 20.

HERE is the reason and encouragement of the heavenly conversation. Why do believers behave themselves as belonging to that city ? Because from thence we look for a Saviour.

Doct. That the earnest expectation of Christ's second coming doth both bind and encourage the saints to have their conversations in heaven.

I shall handle the point in this method—

1. Touch upon the truths contained in the words of the text.

2. How all these do draw up the thoughts and affections of believers to God and heavenly things.

I. The truths contained and implied in the text are these—

First point. That Christ is corporeally and locally in heaven, and not upon earth. Here is his spiritual presence: Mat. xxviii. 20, 'And lo, I am with you to the end of the world;' but there is his bodily presence: Acts iii. 21, 'Whom the heavens must receive until the restitution of all things.' He is there, because he hath business to do there—(1.) To intercede with God; (2.) Powerfully to administer the mediatorial kingdom for the comfort of the elect, and destruction of his adversaries.

1. To intercede with God: Heb. ix. 24, 'He is gone into the holy place not made with hands, there to appear before God for us;' that is, before the throne of the supreme judge, that, by representing his blood shed, he may procure remission of sins for penitent believers. As the high priest under the law, when the sacrifice of atonement for the whole congregation was slain and burnt without the camp; the high priest was to present himself before the mercy-seat with blood and a sweet perfume; so the Lord Jesus having offered up himself a sacrifice of atonement, is gone into the holy place: 'Not by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption for us,' Heb. ix. 12. There is some little difference among interpreters about the time of his entrance, whether at his solemn ascension, forty days after his resurrection, when he was taken up into heaven, or else immediately upon his death, when he had given up the ghost, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst from the top to the bottom, and his soul, separated from the body, and commended into his Father's hands, entered into paradise; then it seemeth our great high priest did enter into heaven, for it may more properly be said that he entered into heaven with his blood, when his soul was separated, than when his body was risen and made immortal, and both body and soul jointly ascended. The sacrifice of atonement was not complete till the blood was presented before the throne of God in the inner sacrary; so then Christ did present himself as slain in heaven before the supreme judge, as having suffered death, and satisfied justice for the sin of man. Now whether the first or second way of entrance, certain it is he is now in heaven interceding for us.

2. Powerfully to administer the mediatorial kingdom.

[1.] For the comfort of the elect, and to see the fruits of his purchase accomplished to them: Eph. iv. 10, 'The same also that ascended far above all heavens, that he might fill all things;' that is, supply his people with a large and plentiful measure of the gifts and graces of his Spirit. His presence there is far more beneficial to us than if he were here upon earth; yea, not only beneficial, but necessary, as being the means to apply his merits, and confer the mercies purchased by his sacrifice.

[2.] For the destruction of his enemies: Ps. cx. 1, 'The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool;' Heb. x. 12, 13, 'But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sin, for ever sat down at the right hand of God; from hence—'

forth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.' His person is in heaven above molestation and abuse; his reign and government is opposed in the world, but by degrees it gets ground upon opposition.

Second point. That at the end of time Christ will come from heaven and judge the world. Reason saith he may come; faith, that he shall come. Reason saith he may come; these principles are evident, that man is God's creature, and therefore his subject; that man hath failed in his subjection to his creator and lord; that, having failed, the holy God may justly call him to an account. Of this man is sorely afraid: Rom. i. 32, 'Who knowing the judgment of God, that they that do such things are worthy of death,' &c.; for reason telleth us that God, who is our creator, is also our governor; and if our governor, then he is our judge; and as such man feareth him. Now this judgment is put into the hands of Christ, who is our lawgiver, who gave us this healing law for the reparation of mankind, and to set them in joint again that they may live unto God. And the lawgiver is the judge; and that he hath a right to be lawgiver and judge. God hath justified his call, in that he raised him from the dead: Acts xvii. 31, 'Because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance to all men, in that he raised him from the dead.' Faith saith that he will come. What shall I say? Angels foretold it: Acts i. 10, 11, 'And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus that is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.' The devils tremble at it: Mat. viii. 29, 'And behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?' The saints departed long for it: 'How long, Lord, holy and true?' Rev. vi. 10. The prophets proclaimed it; from Enoch downward it hath ever been kept up in the church: Jude 14, 15, 'And Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodlily committed, and all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.' And the apostles inculcated it everywhere; yea, above all, our Lord hath assured us of it: John xiv. 2, 3, 'In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you: and if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.' And he hath instituted the Lord's supper to keep up the remembrance and expectation of it: 1 Cor. xi. 26, 'For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come.'

But doth the apostle refer to so long a while, and not rather speak of our coming up to him, which is nearer at hand, than his coming down to us, which is so far off?

1. Not to infringe the doctrine of the saints' happiness as soon as they die, for we presently receive the salvation of the soul, but lest any should doubt of it, on this occasion let us clear that. The soul return-

eth to God: Eccles. xii. 7, 'The spirit shall return to God that gave it.' It is with Christ: Phil. i. 23, 'I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better;' 'To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise,' Luke xxiii. 43; as the wicked are in hell: 1 Peter iii. 19, 'The spirits in prison.' So the 'spirits of just men are made perfect,' Heb. xii. 24. As soon as 'we are absent from the body, we are present with the Lord,' 2 Cor. v. 8. The 'beggar died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom,' Luke xvi. 22; Luke xx. 37, 38, 'Now, that the dead are raised, Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto God.' All things, both in heaven and in earth, are said to be reconciled to God by Christ, Col. i. 20, the universality of the elect, whether already glorified or yet upon earth. It cannot be meant of angels; they were never reconciled, because never any breach between God and them.

2. The apostle mentioneth this time, because till then our own salvation is not perfect nor complete for body and soul. The whole church is not perfected and brought together. Then we shall have many privileges that we had not before.

[1.] It is a day of manifestation: Rom. viii. 19, 'For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.' All is now hid; Christ is hid, and the saints are hid. Their life is hid: Col. iii. 2, 'Our life is hid with Christ in God.' Their glory is hid: 1 John iii. 2, 'Now we are the sons of God, but it doth not appear what we shall be.' But then all shall appear, the persons, their relation to Christ, the glory he will put upon them: 'We shall appear with him in glory;' as Moses told the rebels, Num. vi. 16, 'To-morrow the Lord will show who are his.' Jesus Christ will appear in all his royalty and glory, as the great God and Saviour of the world: we shall put on our best robes. In winter the tree appeareth not what it is; the sap and life is hidden in the root; but when summer cometh, all is discovered.

[2.] It is a day of perfection. Everything tendeth to its perfect state, so do the saints. They cannot be contented to be still as they are; therefore this day is the great motive to them. Then they shall have perfect holiness, perfect freedom from sin, and all the fruits and effects of it. Christ is then a perfect Saviour. He saveth us now in part, but then he saveth us to the utmost. Body and soul are then united and perfectly glorified, and fitted to praise God in heaven. Our Saviour cometh to make an end of what he hath begun. Our souls are made perfect before, but then our bodies are freed from corruption. All christian privileges are then perfect: Eph. iv. 30, 'Ye are sealed to the day of redemption;' Eph. i. 14 'Which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession;' Luke xxi. 28, 'Then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth near.' Regeneration is then perfect: Mat. xix. 28, 'Verily I say unto you, that ye who have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' Adoption: Rom. viii. 23, 'We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the

redemption of our body.' Justification : Acts iii. 19, 'Repent, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshment shall come from the presence of the Lord.' Our judge on his tribunal shall absolve us as with his own mouth, and as it were crown us with his own hands.

[3.] It is a day of congregation or gathering together. The saints are now scattered ; they live in diverse ages, countries, towns, and houses, and have little comfort and knowledge one of another. Then all meet in one assembly or congregation : Ps. i. 5, 'The congregation of the righteous.' There is the great rendezvous. Now God's children are scattered up and down where they may be most useful ; as stars do not shine in a cluster, but are dispersed up and down the heavens. Then all the four winds shall give up their dead ; then the wicked shall be herded together, as straws and sticks are bound in a bundle to set one another a-fire ; adulterers together, drunkards together, bound in bundles : Mat. xiii. 41, 42, 'The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire ; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' So the godly shall meet in a congregation, and never separate more. We cannot enjoy one another's fellowship in this life, because God hath service for us in diverse countries ; therefore the saints are groaning for that happy day. In a wreck, those that are got ashore are lounging and looking for their companions. In short, here the tares are mingled with the wheat. Jacob's cattle and Laban's cattle are together ; but then they shall be separated, and for ever live apart.

[4.] It is a day of glorification : Mat. xxiv. 30, 'They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory ;' when Christ shall get himself a glorious name in the final destruction of all his enemies. He got himself a glorious name when he drowned Pharaoh in the sea ; what will he do when he casteth all the wicked into hell ? Christ showeth his majesty every day, but we have not eyes to see it ; our eyes are dazzled with worldly splendour, but then all mists shall vanish. The time shall come when God shall be dishonoured no more, and sin shall have an end. Here God hath not his perfect glory from us nor in us, as passive objects or active instruments. Objectively : Eph. i. 12, 'That we should be to the praise of his glory.' If man say nothing or do nothing, the work will speak for itself. As active instruments : Mat. v. 16, 'Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.' Now both ways will God be more glorified by us actively, as we shall laud him and praise him for evermore without weariness or distraction. Objectively : 2 Thes. i. 10, 'When he shall be glorified in his saints, and be admired in all them that do believe.' Passively, as more of God is seen in them at that day than ever could be thought of.

Third point. That to true christians he will come in the quality of a saviour ; not as a rigorous judge to condemn us, but as a saviour to free us from all misery.

1. It showeth the way of our getting to heaven. It is in a way of salvation, which is the recovery of a thing or person lost ; so Christ came to seek and to save that which is lost ; as a physician saveth another that cureth him of a disease which otherwise would be mortal. The

shepherd saveth the sheep that snatcheth it out of the lion's mouth. A prince that rescueth the captive subjects saveth them out of the enemy's hands. There are none brought to heaven but by a saviour who recovereth us out of our lost estate, saves us from sin, and all the consequences of sin, that maketh us everlastingly blessed. Thus he saveth us *satisfactione, merito, et efficacia*—by satisfaction, merit, and power.

[1.] By satisfaction he saveth us from the guilt of sin, the curse of the law, and the wrath of God, which is our great encouragement to wait for his coming: 1 Thes. i. 10, 'To wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who hath delivered us from wrath to come.' We could never have heart nor hope to think of his coming beneficial to us without this.

[2.] By his merit he procureth the favour of God, and all those blessings which are bestowed upon the people of God. Having expiated sin, he obtained the grant of pardon and life in the new covenant. He hath purchased for us the image and favour of God and eternal happiness: 1 Thes. iv. 9, 10, 'For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.'

[3.] By way of efficacy and power, inasmuch as by his Spirit he doth effect and work in us all those things which belong to salvation; so it is said, Titus iii. 5, 'He hath saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost;' 2 Tim. i. 9, 'He hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling;' Heb. v. 9, 'He is the author of salvation.' There are many adjunct causes, but he is the principal: 'We are saved by his life,' Rom. v. 10. The merit of his humiliation, the power of his exaltation.

2. I shall show what is the work of his second coming. It is to perfect our salvation. Then he shows himself a saviour indeed when he giveth us eternal life and our full happiness. The high priest, after he had been within the veil, was to come out again and bless the people; so Christ shall appear the second time: Heb. ix. 28, 'To them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation.' If we continue waiting and looking, and do rest upon his undertaking, and in the meantime be performing the duties required of us, he will come as a saviour.

3. This coming is certainly and earnestly looked for by the godly. It is good to observe how differently this coming of Christ is entertained. It is questioned by the atheists; it is dreaded by the wicked and impenitent; but it is lovingly expected by the godly. For the first, see 2 Peter iii. 3, 4, 'There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, saying, Where is the promise of his coming?' They would eternally enjoy the pleasures of the present world, and therefore labour to banish out of their hearts all thoughts of this great day, and take up all obvious prejudices, to smother the belief of it. They would be glad in their hearts to hear such news, that Christ would never come. Now their wishes easily commence into their opinions. Christ's second coming is their horror and torment, which they would willingly get rid of. For the second, it is dreaded by the wicked and impenitent: Acts xxiv. 25, 'Felix trembled' when Paul 'reasoned of judgment to come.' There is reason for it; for

Christ cometh to them as a terrible judge: 2 Thes. i. 8, 'In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.' That coming is described as light and as fire. To the third, to the godly, it is not matter of terror, but joy and delight; not like the handwriting on the wall to Belshazzar, but like comfortable tidings to the waiting soul. They look for it, Titus ii. 13, they long for it, 2 Tim. iv. 8. He cometh to them as a saviour, to put an end to all their miseries.

But more particularly let us explain this looking. It implieth faith, hope, and patience. Faith addeth certainty to hope, hope earnestness to faith, and holy love strength to patience. For because we believe and hope, we patiently wait for the coming of Christ; or rather take in love also, and make patience an act of hope.

[1.] Faith is the ground of this looking; because we believe the promise, therefore we determine that 'he that shall come will come, and will not tarry,' Heb. x. 37. Faith seeth the certainty of Christ's day afar off, for it is 'the evidence of things not seen;' as Rebecca espied Isaac at a great distance. It looketh upon Christ as if he were on his way, and maketh the believer stand ready to meet him and welcome him. In the eye of faith it is sure and near, and as so apprehended worketh on the soul.

[2.] Love. The saints love Christ though they never saw him. They have heard much of him, felt much of him, tasted much of him, and therefore love his appearing, long for his coming: Cant. viii. 14, 'Make haste, my beloved, and be like the young hart or roe upon the mountains of spices.' Christ is not slack, but the church's affections are strong. They have a love to Christ himself, who at his appearing is to be glorified. They have a love to the church in general, which is that day to be adorned as a bride for her husband, and fully to be freed from all sins and troubles; love to themselves and their own happiness, which is that day fully to be perfected: Rev. xxii. 20, Christ saith, 'I come;' and the church, like a quick echo, saith, 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.' It taketh the word out of Christ's mouth. Christ's voice and the church's voice are unisons. Christ speaketh in a way proper to him, in a way of promise; and the church speaketh in a way proper to her, in a way of prayer. This is her last suit, 'Even so, come.' You will say, 'This is the desire of the church in general; but doth every believer so desire it?'

Ans. The part followeth the reason of the whole, and the same spirit is in all the faithful. 'The Spirit and the bride say, Come.' The Holy Ghost breedeth this desire. The meanest and weakest, that tremble at their unpreparedness, have some inclination that way. Can a man desire that Christ should come into his heart, and not come to judgment? There may be a drowsiness and indisposition, but no total extinction of the desire of meeting with Christ.

[3.] Hope. Because we believe it and we desire it, therefore we expect it. Only in the looking of hope you may discern contrary affections; as first, there is both rejoicing and groaning. Rejoicing: Rom. v. 3, 'We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.' Groaning: 2 Cor. v. 2, 'In this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven;' ver. 4, 'We that are in this taber-

nacle groan, being burdened.' They rejoice, being under hope, groan because they have not yet attained. We rejoice because the estate to come is so excellent, and we groan because the estate present is so miserable. We rejoice because certain; we groan because we are yet conflicting with difficulties, and are but making out of our claim and title. Once more, there is a desiring and yet a waiting, and hope is described by both. By desiring, which showeth our esteem of the benefit, and earnestness to enjoy it; by waiting or tarrying the Lord's leisure: both are consistent: 'Waiting for and hasting to the coming of the Lord,' 2 Peter iii. 12; *προσδοκῶντες καὶ σπεύδοντες*, contrary words, but coming from the same grace. We render it, 'hastening unto the coming,' but it is only *σπεύδοντας τὴν παρουσίαν*, 'hastening the coming.' Hope would fain enjoy, yet there is a time for labours, difficulties, and troubles. The hope exciteth both the longing expectation and the patient waiting: 1 Thes. i. 3, 'Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope;' Rom. viii. 25, 'If we hope for what we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.' The time seemeth long, but the reward is sure, therefore we must wait God's leisure. In short, there are desires which quicken us to use all means to attain it; there is patience to wait God's leisure while we are exercised with difficulties; therefore the saints are described to be such 'as wait for the coming of the Lord Jesus,' 1 Cor. i. 7; 1 Thes. i. 10. It is made the end of our conversation; we desire, yet wait our time to enjoy the glorious blessings which God hath promised.

II. Why this should draw up the believer's thoughts to heaven and heavenly things.

1. Because Christ is in heaven, and therefore we must be heavenly. He is our adamant or loadstone: Col. iii. 12, 'If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God.' Members must not be severed from their head. The love which christians bear to Christ should be such, that their affections should be set on the place where he is, and the things which are in it, and flow from it and tend to it. All this should be dear to a christian; and so it enforceth a heavenly conversation. Love is an affection of union: it desireth to be with the party loved; therefore love to Christ is not satisfied with the present estate, it would be with Christ, and in that state and place where it may have most union with him.

2. Because he cometh from thence to bring us thither. His business at his second coming is to translate us into that heavenly city: John xiv. 3, 'I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.' Therefore now we should behave ourselves as candidates of eternity. His whole design is to bring us to that place where he is. Mortification is thence inferred: Col. iii. 1, 5, 'If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Mortify your members which are upon earth.' All holiness and godliness of conversation: 2 Peter iii. 11, 12, 'Seeing all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness? looking for and hasting to the coming of the day of God;' Titus ii. 12, 13,

'Teaching us, that, denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.'

3. That he cometh as a saviour; as one—

[1.] That hath done enough to save us from sin and misery, and the flames of hell. Despair crippleth our endeavours. If we could not comfortably hope for heaven, we should never labour for it. But now, 'Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto everlasting life,' Jude 21. Though we be sinners that need a great deal of mercy, we may expect it, and so be encouraged to labour for it. We are engaged by our relation to him.

[2.] He cometh then as a saviour to us; we are his people. There are two relations with respect to the day of judgment—master and husband.

(1.) Master. Good servants wait for their master's coming: Mat. xxiv. 46, 'Blessed is that servant whom, when his lord cometh, he shall find so doing.' Here we have our vales, but then our wages: 'Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me.' Christ doth not come empty-handed to his faithful servants. Well, then, the servant that doth expect his master's coming, will ply his work: 2 Tim. iv. 1, 'I charge thee before God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his coming and kingdom.'

(2.) As our husband; that is a sweeter relation: 'The bride saith, Come,' Rev. xxii. 17. We are contracted to Christ now, but then is the day of espousals. A wife that looketh for her husband's coming puts all things in readiness.

4. The looking inferreth a heavenly conversation.

[1.] There is faith in it. Faith, resting upon the promises of God, is assured and fully persuaded of the fruition of glory in God's time. If it be so, whither should our thoughts, words, and actions tend, but to this blessed estate? otherwise our practice will be a manifest contradiction to our faith. You believe there is a God and a life to come, and thereupon promise to renounce the devil, world, and the flesh; but you live as if you were in league with the devil, world, and the flesh, and at defiance with God and heaven; and so have 'a form of godliness,' 2 Tim. iii. 5? Do ye believe in Christ to bring you to God and everlasting glory, when your heart is another way, and you live as strangers to the heavenly mind, and have truly an unheavenly conversation. Either you must renounce the faith or your carnal conversation. If you take on the profession of the one to countenance the other, you wrong God and your own souls, and double your sin.

[2.] As there is love in it. If you love Christ, and do not desire to be with him, you go about to reconcile contradictions. As she said to Sampson, Judges xvi. 15, 'How canst thou say, I love thee, when thy heart is not with me?' That is a strange love to be content to be still away from the party loved, and to sit down satisfied with the present happiness.

[3.] Hope. We do place our blessedness in heaven, and yet fly from it as a misery; long and look for that which we have no mind to enjoy. Surely hope withdraweth our minds from, and moderateth our

fears and cares about them. Looking, as it noteth a desire or a patient expectation, deadeneth our hearts to the world.

(1.) As a desirous expectation. These vehement desires and groans after an estate of happiness breed sincerity, and endeavours to make it our main scope that we may be approved and accepted of Christ at his coming.

(2.) Patient expectation. This engageth to perseverance, or bringeth forth 'fruit with patience,' Luke viii. 15. The reward is yet to come, in the meantime we are pressed with a multitude of temptations, persecutions, remainders of sin. There will a time come when we shall be freed from sin and sorrow for ever. We have God's word to assure us of it; therefore we must content ourselves in God's will. It is his will and pleasure we shall stay a little while longer and suffer more. He might require a far longer time of trial to give us so great a reward, but it is but a short time between our regeneration and full possession.

Use 1. To press you to look for Christ from heaven as a saviour.

To this end—

1. Seek reconciliation, and be at peace with God: 2 Peter iii. 14, 'Wherefore, seeing we look for such things, be diligent that you may be found of him in peace.' Others tremble at the mention of his coming; the guilt of sin maketh this day terrible to us. When you have gotten an interest in Christ, and some sure and comfortable hope of absolution, you will cheerfully expect his coming; then he cometh as a saviour: Job xix. 25, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.' He cometh as a saviour, not as a severe judge. If you have made your peace with him, there will be a happy meeting at the last day.

2. Be not only reconciled, but renewed and sanctified, as well as justified; for 'The Spirit and the bride saith, Come,' Rev. xxii. 17. The Holy Ghost, by residing in the hearts of the faithful, breedeth this desire. Nature saith not, Come; this is a disposition above nature. Carnal nature saith, Stay away still. If it might go by voices, whether Christ should come or no, would carnal men give their voice this way? 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.' The voice of corrupt nature is, 'Depart,' Job xxii. 14. They are of the mind of the devil: 'Jesus, thou Son of God, art thou come to torment us before the time?' If thieves and malefactors might have the liberty to choose whether there should be an assizes, do you think they would look for, and long for the time of its approach? Till we are renewed we have no inclination to or desire of these things.

3. Labour for some measure of consolation as well as sanctification: Rom. viii. 23, 'Ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.' The first-fruits are the beginnings of heaven. These being but a little, bear a like proportion with eternal glory, as the first-fruits with the harvest, and do assure us as an earnest of full possession. Well, then, as Daniel looked towards Jerusalem in his prayers, Dan. vi. 10, so let us often look to heaven, and remember we have a saviour there, who will one day come from heaven.

Use 2. Prepare for it, make all things ready. There must be strict

and heavenly walking, that we may 'have boldness in that day, and may not be ashamed at his coming,' 1 John ii. 28. Causes of shame are either nakedness: 2 Cor. v. 3, 'That we may not be found naked,' that is, destitute of all grace. Folly, or perverse or unadvised choice, when we are blinded by the delusions of the flesh; or when we make a worldly choice, this will appear to be folly and shame: Luke xii. 20, 'Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; and then whose shall these things be which thou hast provided?' Or hypocrisy, when our cheating and fair pretences shall be discovered: Mat. xxii. 12, 'Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? and the man was speechless.' Or unfaithfulness, when we have not discharged our trust: Luke xix. 22, 'Out of thy own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant.' Or unthankfulness for great benefits, such as we have received by Christ: Rom. ii. 4, 'Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and long-suffering?' Despising not only the mercies of common providence, but the blessings of the covenant: Heb. ii. 3, 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?'

But who will have boldness at that day? Such as are united to Christ: Rom. viii. 1, 'There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ.' Such as are by that union assimilated and made like Christ: 1 John iv. 17, 'That we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, so are we in the world.' If we continue in that blessed and gracious estate faithfully, without defection and apostasy: 1 John ii. 28, 'And now, little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.' That are not ashamed of Christ's despised ways, but while we are in the world do faithfully promote his kingdom: Luke ix. 26, with xxi. 16, 'Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when he shall come in his glory.' Who persevere in the conflict: 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course: henceforth 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 that love his appearing.'

SERMON XVII.

Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.—PHIL. iii. 21.

IN the context the apostle showeth the different course of living observed by the true and false christians, 'They mind earthly things,' but 'Our conversation is in heaven.'

Now he giveth two reasons of the heavenly life—

1. One is taken from their expectation of Christ's coming.
2. What he will do at his coming to translate us into the heavenly city and to fit us for it, 'He shall change our vile bodies.'