

The Heavenly citizen

1837

Phil. 3. 20 "Our conversation is in heaven"

~~Πολιτεία~~
Conversation means citizenship
We are commanded to seek first the Kingdom of heaven &c - to set our affections on things above - to lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven where moth &c -

The saints of God are represented as pilgrims & strangers on earth - as without a country or a home here below but seeking one even an heavenly - a celestial city, an house not made with hands &c

But are we hence to infer that they have nothing to do on earth but wait? By no means. They are citizens of heaven while on earth

1. 2. They are

1. Governed by laws which are derived from heaven & are fully obeyed there; & not by the maxims of a worldly policy. It is enough

to divide the world in favor of any course to know that it will be for their earthly interests, wealth, popularity, pleasure, ease &c. Often, indeed, they spend the whole of life in studying how they may gratify evil passions—overreach an enemy; supplant a rival; bring down a superior; betray confidence; support a party; revenge a supposed injury.

On the contrary: their policy is to make advances towards that perfection in all the will of God which is the glory of the upper world: their concern is with themselves—first with their hearts to cultivate a temper fair & honest charitable & upright benevolent & pure & 2^d with their lives that they may always act as becomes their relations—especially to their heavenly Country

2. They stand in certain relations to persons & Things heavenly—
— to God Creator Redeemer

Sanctifier, Provider, Patron
Guide, & Merciful Helper.
— to Angels, ministering spir-
its.— Things, reward the ob-
jects of hope & holy ambition
These will be proportioned to merit.

3— Privileges— Favor— accept-
ance— peace— joy— access without
fear to a throne of grace— hope—
fellowship with God, & his saints

4 A station of duty assigned
in which to serve the interests
of the Community of which
they are citizens & promote
the glory of the Lord— It may
be a very humble station, as
that of a servant under a cruel
master yet even this condition
may have a glory attached to it
by the sublimity of Christian prin-
ciples— or otherwise a condition

of great suffering & pain & reproach; yet if it is the will of God to lead us thus to glory. amen!

Remarks.

1. Not that other considerations pertaining to this life should have no influence. A saint may be a member of a family or civil community & the interests of these he ought to study: but the great principles above stated are to regulate & control the rest.

Abstraction from the world was the apostles duty & it is the duty of others so far as in the same situation. But none now are apostles. The ministers of religion are not. A man is a citizen of the Republic of Letters. This does not nullify his other relations. But it renders it vain for him to think of promotion or wealth.

So The Christian

2 In times when heavenly influence is needed it will be most felt. You hear of the extacies of

martyrs & the raptures of dying
saints & you wonder why you
can not feel them. But you need
them not. Your heart is not emp-
ty of the world. Nor should it.
Your business calls you. But
should God by penitence or sick-
ness or other affliction call
you off from business & empty
your heart of cares, then you
will have a place in it for heav-
enly joys. Yet never should earthly
things so engross as to cause us
to forget heavenly. But we can-
not detach us from earth nor
should we try. That we should
leave to God to do when & how
he may think proper. In the
mean time he can never be
acting out of character as a
citizen of heaven who strives to
render ^a heaven of earth by improv-
ing it But

3 A perfect resemblance is not to be sought. This is what makes so many disappointments. We forget that heaven is our home & set about making one here & are vexed when we find we cannot.

4 The sphere of religious feeling & action ought to admit no earthly policy in it. The religion which has made the most noise in the world is a secularized religion - Rome - What has religion to do with our sectarian disputes & party measures?

5 The spirit of the heavenly citizen is not to be moved by worldly motives. You cannot awaken even the refined feelings of the unrenewed heart by gross applications. Generosity, gratitude, esteem, any more than piety cannot be elicited by mer-
chant - cannot be bought: nor is it right to bestow earthly honors or re-

wards upon piety. Even the re-
wards of heaven if the scene out-
ful in view, it is probable, would
exert a disturbing force upon
the heart which would be
unfavorable to virtue as im-
parting to it a character not
suited to earth.

Hope

April 1837

Hope

Surely goodness & mercy shall
follow me all the days of my
life & I shall dwell in the house
of the Lord forever. Psal XXII

or 1 Cor. 13. 13

Hope is compounded of desire
& expectation.

The thing here expressed as
the object of desire & expecta-
tion is a happy life on
earth under the kind care
of Gods gracious Providence
& perfect felicity in Heaven.

Respecting the first let it
be observed that though
proper care should be ta-
ken to take such a course
in life as naturally leads
to happy results; since
to do otherwise would be

what the Scriptures call
tempting God 1.2. expecting
him to dissolve the established
connection which ~~the~~ himself
has instituted between ante-
cedents & consequent causes &
effects in order to guard us a-
gainst the consequences of our
presumption & folly - a weak-
ness which nothing but the
highest degree of spiritual pride
will look for in the Duty -
y^t, on the other hand it becomes
us always to bear in mind that
the good we hope for, as well
as that we have already re-
ceived comes to us not from
our wisdom or enterprise but
from his goodness & mercy
- It is good ness which in-
clines him to take care of

his creatures, which is delightfully manifested in all parts & departments of animated Nature but especially in the constitution of man & the provision made for his comfort & his

MERCY which inclines him to have compassion on the miserable & the undeserving: of which whoever best understand the Law of God & his own heart & ways has the liveliest sense & the most affecting experience.

2. But it may be proper to ask why Heaven is desirable.

All know they must die and the prevailing belief of the reflecting part of mankind

has always been that in a future state there are two opposite conditions that of happiness for the good & misery for the evil: it will be therefore the choice of all to take heaven for their eternal home rather than the other alternative preferring it for no other reason but this that it is an asylum from misery. In this case heaven is desired merely because hell is feared. It is not so with such as are truly religious though they too may & do desire heaven because it is exempt from all evil. But they do not stop here

1. Heaven is free from bodily pain & infirmity & death.
2. From sin & all the disorders that flow from it

3. Human nature is there perfect soul & body.

4. There the manifestations of the divine perfections are full & satisfactory - ample scope is given to all the faculties

5. There are the pleasures of a refined & happy society

11. The most satisfactory, indeed, the only satisfactory reason for expecting heaven is that God has promised it in the word of his revelation

But the doctrine is reasonable as appears from considering

1. Hope, which is natural to man

2. Fear in the guilty

3. Man's intellectual nature is above his present condition

5. The world of Matter is magnificent this doctrine must be true to make out a correspondence in the world of mind

6. Man's happiness here is not in proportion to his capacity.

- 7 Moral habits & intellectual desires become in the good stronger to the last moment of life
8. Disorder of the present state & the tendency of virtue counteracted.
- 9 Desire of posthumous Fame.
10. Good influence on morals

But all have no right to expect it: but such only as honestly endeavor to do the will of God in the present state. This is the grand criterion of Character given by the Divine Master himself. The measure of one's creed is no safe criterion. Formerly, a future state was revealed obscurely. And, indeed, it does not seem necessary to that degree of - & kind of virtue proper for a state of trial that there should be in any case such a manifest evidence of it as to do ^{away} the difference between hope & certainty

Let us live so here as to confirm in
ourselves the hope of immortality.

Heaven will make up for all
the difficulties encountered in at-
taining it.

It is vain to look for heaven
on earth, though a heaven may
be begun by the anticipation of
it.

The bearing which things
have on the vast future
should determine their value
in our consideration.

Let the hope of heaven cheer
us under the disappointments of
life &

Finally let us there place
our hopes where they will
not lead to disappointment.

The man who lives wholly
intent on the advantages of
the present world runs counter
to the Established Order of
Things.