

in heaven." His home is ours, and where He dwelleth we are sure of recognition as children at home.

There, too, is the residence of our King. We are the loyal and loving subjects of Jesus. To Him we have devoted ourselves. With Him we are indissolubly one. He is our life. But He has ascended into heaven, as our Forerunner, wearing our nature. Is not the city of the King the city of His friends and subjects also? There He will remain till He returns in glory. The heavens have received Him "till the restitution of all things." Therefore in those heavens is our citizenship. "From whence also we look for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ." "Looking for that blessed hope"—loving and longing for His appearing, must not the city where He dwells, from which He will set forth, to which He will return, be our city too?

There our friends are gathering. How many have left our side with whom we took sweet counsel! Are we to be always divided? Shall we not meet again, and meet for ever? In that holy city the saints of all countries and all ages are assembling. Day by day the number increases. With them our hearts beat in sympathy. We love the same Lord. We obey the same laws. We engage in the same service. We share the same joys. Is not our fellowship, our brotherhood, our commonwealth, with them? If they are in heaven, must not our citizenship be there?

Heaven is our home. Jesus said, "In my Father's house are many mansions: I go to prepare a place for you." For every one of His followers the Saviour is making ready. He is preparing a place for us and preparing us for the place. There we shall dwell for ever. We are expected there. The Prince expects us. The angels expect us. Our departed friends expect us. We shall soon be there. For aught we know, we may be there this very day. Oh, is not our citizenship in heaven? There is the goal towards which we have long been pressing. There is the rest for which we have long been sighing. There is the home to which we have long been travelling. There is the prize for which we have long been striving. Yes! there is our citizenship.

II. Heaven being our city, our life should be heavenly. Our citizenship should be manifested in a spirit and conduct in harmony with it. "Our conversation is in heaven."

Admiring the many beauties with which the Creator has decked this earth; thankfully enjoying the gifts which a kind Providence bestows; humanly feeling for our own and others' sorrows; diligently performing the duties of our various stations; devoutly discharging the obligations of our earthly relationships, private or public; generously interested in all things—domestic, commercial, scientific, political—which relate to our present life and the general welfare of mankind,—let us ever bear about with us the inspiring assurance that "our conversation is in heaven." Let us not, in the diligent and zealous pursuit of any earthly object, become too eager, so that it usurps the very highest place in our thoughts and we become absorbed by it: "our conversation is in heaven:" and the obligations of this higher citizenship are to regulate all others. Let us not be too much elated by prosperity: wealth, power, rank, fame, should not intoxicate one who has an inheritance above, who has friends amongst the angels, who is a child of God, whose citizenship is in heaven. Nor let us be too much depressed by adversity. We are human still: let us feel humanly our human sorrows; let us drop tears into the graves of earth; the graves, not only of departed friends, but of blighted affections, and withered hopes; but we must not sorrow as the world sorrows. Our most precious treasure is untouched; our chief joy is

undimmed; our best friend changes not; "our conversation is in heaven."

"Let us walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called." Let us prize it above all other possessions and privileges. Are men zealous in attaining earthly distinctions? Then let us "give diligence to make our calling and election sure." Let us by no act of ours endanger our high privilege. Let us omit no precaution to confirm and ratify this citizenship. And let us live on earth as those whose names are enrolled in heaven. We boast our freedom. Who would be a slave? Is not the thought intolerable to a free citizen of a free State? Heaven is the home of freedom. There alone it is perfectly enjoyed, for there alone is perfect love. There is no fear in love, there is no restraint in love. In heaven there is no wish ungratified, because no wish ever arises which is opposed to the law of love. Let us live here in the spirit of this freedom. He that committeth sin is the slave of sin. Shall we, having been emancipated, and on whom have been conferred the privileges of the heavenly citizenship, yield ourselves again to bondage? "Our conversation is in heaven." Heaven is the "Holy city." Nothing that defileth enters there. The holy alone are enrolled as its citizens. They who dwell there "have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." We are on our way to join them; and Jesus is cleansing us from our stains, and will present us to Himself "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing." Shall we then defile ourselves with iniquity, wilfully stain our garments with the filth of the world, "make a god of our belly, and mind earthly things?" Our conversation is in heaven!

The honour and interest of the heavenly kingdom are in some measure committed to the trust of everyone of its citizens. As an Englishman in a foreign land ought to feel that the honour of his country is compromised by his conduct, and that he must act as a representative of his nation; so let us, while strangers and sojourners below, remember that we are to act towards the world as representatives of heaven? Is our spiritual life thence derived? Are we enrolled amongst its citizens? Is it our Father's house, the palace of our King, the home which is being prepared for us? Are we being educated and disciplined for it? Are we expected there, and do we profess to share in the privileges, the motives, the joys of its inhabitants? Do we hope soon to join them? Then the world around us should see something of this. Our conversation should be in heaven if our citizenship is there.

As a loyal citizen desires to promote the prosperity of his country, so we should try to promote the best interests of the Church, its internal peace and purity, its external progress and triumph. We should endeavour to animate one another to increased loyalty, and to persuade aliens and foes to "become fellow-citizens of the saints and of the household of God."

And let us from the heaven where is our citizenship, "look for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ." The Saviour! Glorious title! Saviour from sin! Saviour from sorrow! Saviour from death! *Our Saviour and our Lord!* We believe that He will come again in great glory, to reign for ever and ever! Then He will gather into the Heavenly Jerusalem all its citizens, cleansed from every stain, delivered from all sorrow, to be for ever in His presence, where there is fulness of joy, and to serve Him day and night in His temple. He is on His way! Let us look for His appearing. Amid all the excitements and joys of life—look for the Saviour! Amid all the cares and anxieties of life—look for the Saviour! Amid all the toils and conflicts of life—look for the Saviour! Amid all the disappointments and woes of life—look for the Saviour! When you draw near the dark river, look not for death—look for the Saviour! Our citizenship is in heaven—let our conversation be there too! O exalted privilege! O glorious hope! It will dignify every duty, and illumine every path, and enhance every pleasure, and mitigate every grief, and fortify in every conflict, and spread a rainbow of glory over all the spray and mists that come up from the troubled waters of controversy and political contention to remember that "our citizenship is in heaven." *Reprinted by permission from "Homeward Bound" (London: Nisbet, and revised by the author.*