

Quotes on Heaven

by

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Every godly man hath his heart in heaven; his affections are mainly set on what is to be had there. Heaven is his chosen country and inheritance. He hath respect to heaven, as a traveller, who is in a distant land, hath to his own country. The traveller can content himself to be in a strange land for a while, but his own native land is preferred by him to all others.

The saint prefers that enjoyment of God, for which he *hopes* hereafter, to anything in this world. He looketh not so much at the things which are seen and temporal, as at those which are unseen and eternal.

When the saints in heaven shall look upon the damned in hell, it will serve to give them a greater sense of their own happiness, seeing how vastly different their case is from their own. The view of the doleful condition of the damned will make them the more prize their own blessedness. When they shall see how dreadful the anger of God is, it will make them the more prize his love. They will rejoice so much the more that they are not the objects of God's anger, but of his favour; that they are not the subjects of his dreadful wrath, but are treated as his children, are taken near to him, to dwell in the everlasting embraces of his love.

Labour to obtain such a disposition of mind that you may choose heaven for your inheritance and home; and may earnestly long for it, and be willing to change this world, and all its enjoyments, for heaven. Labour to have your heart taken up so much about heaven, and heavenly enjoyments, as that you may rejoice when God calls you to leave your best earthly friends and comforts for heaven, there to enjoy God and Christ.

You must be brought to sell all for heaven. Matt. xiii. 44, 45, 46. Heaven must be to you like the treasure hid in a field; or like the pearl of great price. If you would have heaven, you must take it as your whole portion; you must in your heart part with all other things for it,

and it must be your manner actually to part with them whenever they stand in the way of your getting forward towards heaven. If you would have heaven, you must sell your worldly profit and your credit, and the good will of your neighbours, and your worldly pleasures and conveniences, and whatever stands in your way. Many flatter themselves that they shall obtain heaven without this, and think they have a right to heaven, though they were never brought to this, but they are sure to find themselves disappointed.

Here much of the work to which the saints are called, consists in labouring, in fighting, in toilsome travelling in a waste howling wilderness, in mourning and suffering, and in offering up strong crying and tears. But there in heaven, their work continually is to lift up their joyful songs of praise. This world is a valley of tears, a world filled with sighs and groans. One is groaning under some bodily pain, another is mourning and lamenting over a dear departed friend; another is crying out by reason of the arm of the oppressor. But in heaven there is no mixture of such sounds as these; there is nothing to be heard amongst them but the sweet and glorious melody of God's praises.

But when the soul leaves the body, all these clogs and hindrances shall be removed, every separating wall shall be broken down, and every impediment taken out of the way, and all distance shall cease; the heart shall be wholly and forever attached and bound to him, by a perfect view of his glory. And the vital union shall then be brought to perfection; the soul shall live perfectly in and upon Christ, being perfectly filled with his spirit, and animated by his vital influences; living, as it were, only by Christ's life, without any remainder of spiritual death, or carnal life.

The souls of true saints, when absent from the body go to be with Jesus Christ, as they are brought into a most perfect conformity to and union with him. Their spiritual conformity is begun while they are in the body; here beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, they are changed into the same image; but when they come to see him as he is, in heaven, then they become like him in another manner. That perfect sight will abolish all remains of deformity, disagreement, and sinful unlikeness; as all darkness is abolished before the full blaze of the sun's meridian light: it is impossible that the least degree of obscurity should remain before such light; so it is impossible the least degree of sin and spiritual deformity

should remain, in such a view of the spiritual beauty and glory of Christ, as the saints enjoy in heaven; when they see that Sun of righteousness without a cloud, they themselves shine forth as the sun, and shall be as little suns, without a spot.

When the saints in glory, therefore, shall see the doleful state of the damned, how will this heighten their sense of the blessedness of their own state, so exceedingly different from it! When they shall see how miserable others of their fellow-creatures are, who were naturally in the same circumstances with themselves; when they shall see the smoke of their torment, and the raging of the flames of their burning, and hear their dolorous shrieks and cries, and consider that they in the meantime are in the most blissful state, and shall surely be in it to all eternity; how will they rejoice!

This is the mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and hither the angels conduct the souls of the saints when they leave their earthly tabernacles. When they come there, they shall be received with a joyful welcome, the doors of this glorious city are opened to them, and they shall have entrance given to them into heaven, as an inheritance to which they have a right. .. And then shall open to view that glorious world, that beautiful city, and delightful paradise, which they had often before heard of, and thought of, and desired; then they shall see it, and possess it as their own. There they shall be welcomed and joyfully received by that glorious company that dwell there, by the angels, and by the saints that went to heaven before them. There was joy among them at their conversion, and now also will there be joy among them when they are brought home to glory...The Saviour shall then rejoice when he shall receive a soul that he loved before the foundation of the world; and for which he laid down his life, and endured such dreadful sufferings. This was the joy that was set before him, to redeem and make happy the souls of his elect; and he will rejoice, therefore, when he sees this accomplished. He will bid them welcome, and make them welcome, and they shall be received into the full enjoyment of his love...Then the soul shall behold that glory and taste that pleasure which it long hoped for, and thought of with delight, and the thoughts of which were wont to be such a support to it when on earth; then shall it know by experience what the joys of heaven are.

It has been the ambition of earthly monarchs to make the cities where they dwell exceedingly magnificent...But if those earthly cities and palaces are some of them so glorious, which are for the habitation of worms, how glorious may we think that to be which is for the glorious habitation of God Almighty! As the third heavens are higher than the earth, so we may expect that it is proportionally more glorious than any earthly garden, city, or palace. Heaven is not only the city of God, but his palace; not only his palace, but his throne...How much more glorious is that heavenly temple which God himself has built, to be the place of his glorious presence among glorified saints and angels throughout all eternity! This is a place contrived on purpose to show the boundless riches of God's grace and love; and therefore, God has not spared as to the delights and glories with which he has adorned the place. God is rich enough to make the place transcend all created glory. Earthly kings build their houses and palaces, and make them magnificent, according to their wealth and ability; but God is infinitely rich, he does not spare for the cost of the treasures to be laid out in adorning heaven, through fear of impoverishing himself. The glory of his residence is what we cannot conceive of.

The saints in heaven shall see and converse with Christ...They shall see him, as appearing in his glorified human nature, with their bodily eyes; and this will be a most glorious sight. The loveliness of Christ as thus appearing will be a most ravishing thing to them; for though the bodies of the saints shall appear with an exceeding beauty and glory, yet the body of Christ will without doubt immensely surpass them, as much as the brightness of the sun does that of the stars. The glorified body of Christ will be the masterpiece of all God's workmanship in the whole material universe. There shall be in his glorious countenance the manifestations of his glorious spiritual perfections, his majesty, his holiness, his surpassing grace, and love, and meekness. The eye will never be wearied with beholding this glorious sight.

Some godly persons are the subjects of very great outward afflictions, and some are the subjects of great spiritual darkness...They argue that if God loved them, and had made them his children, he would never leave them in such darkness and distress, he would give them more of the light of his countenance. They are ready to say with themselves, if God loves me, why does he not give me more comfort, why does he see me in such darkness, and does not comfort me? But what we have heard may solve all the difficulty. If their happiness

throughout all eternity be so great, of how little consequence is it what may be their condition for that short moment they continue in this world! What if they are in the dark, what if they walk in darkness and are exercised with great trouble! how little difference will it make, though it be cast into the scales, when weighed against that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory! It will prove lighter than vanity. If God gives eternal happiness to them, that is evident proof of his love, and all the darkness and sorrow they can meet with in this world are not worthy to be mentioned. All this darkness, how long so ever continued, if we compare it with future glory, vanishes into nothing.

There are different degrees of happiness and glory in heaven. As there are degrees among the angels, viz. thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers; so there are degrees among the saints. In heaven are many mansions, and of different degrees of dignity. The glory of the saints above will be in some proportion to their eminency in holiness and good works here. Christ will reward all according to their works....It will be no damp to the happiness of those who have lower degrees of happiness and glory, that there are others advanced in glory above them: for all shall be perfectly happy, every one shall be perfectly satisfied. Every vessel that is cast into this ocean of happiness is full, though there are some vessels far larger than others; and there shall be no such thing as envy in heaven, but perfect love shall reign through the whole society. Those who are not so high in glory as others, will not envy those that are higher, but they will have so great, and strong, and pure love to them, that they will rejoice in their superior happiness; their love to them will be such that they will rejoice that they are happier than themselves; so that instead of having a damp to their own happiness, it will add to it. They will see it to be fit that they that have been most eminent in works of righteousness should be most highly exalted in glory; and they will rejoice in having that done, that is fittest to be done. There will be a perfect harmony in that society; those that are most happy will also be most holy, and all will be both perfectly holy and perfectly happy. But yet there will be different degrees of both holiness and happiness according to the measure of each one's capacity, and therefore those that are lowest in glory will have the greatest love to those that are highest in happiness, because they will see most of the image of God in them; and having the greatest love to them, they will rejoice to see them the most happy and the highest in glory. And so, on the other hand, those that are highest in glory, as they will be the most lovely, so they will be fullest of love: as they will

excel in happiness, they will proportionally excel in divine benevolence and love to others, and will have more love to God and to the saints than those that are lower in holiness and happiness.

There is, it may be, not one of us but who hopes to be a saint in heaven, and there continually to sing praises to God and the Lamb; but how disagreeable will it be with such a hope, to live in the neglect of praising God now! We ought now to begin that work which we intend shall be the work of another world; for this life is given us on purpose that therein we might prepare for a future life. The present state is a state of probation and preparation; a state of preparation for the enjoyments and employment of another, future, and eternal state; and no one is ever admitted to those enjoyments and employments, but those who are prepared for them here. If ever we would go to heaven, we must be fitted for heaven in this world; we must here have our souls moulded and fashioned for that work and that happiness. They must be formed for praise, and they must begin their work here. The beginnings of future things are in this world. The seed must be sown here; the foundation must be laid in this world. Here is laid the foundation of future misery, and of future happiness. If it be not begun here, it never will be begun.