





BY T.

THIS is not something in the major, than anthem, blossom. Th we shall have ence. The first disagreeable are of no serv sweep through dies, and the

ple of the town are sepulchered, but these moral ciphers escape, and attend their funerals with dry eye and provoking healthfulness. After a long life, in which they helped to carry no burdens and enlighten no gloom, they abscond from the world. The decencies of society demand a funeral service, and so the minister comes and reads of a resurrection which discourages all present with the idea that the uselessness and corporate nothingness which the world thought itself about to get rid of is to be continued everlastingly under other auspices. Explain that if you can.

But the other mystery is as great. Why do so many of those who have made themselves indispensable have such abbreviated careers? Why does the light go out at the time the darkness is the thickest? Why does the staff break w for support? Why th Scrymser, the wife of and the daughter of I she was so indispens

superb womanhood. t was engrafted on -divine grace added s. If she had im- save the orthodox s that we all have disclose them even With what good ed judgment and he brightened her When I asked him to ties, he said: "Take t a glorious influ- upon a husband sus- session, and what an- ly, mind and soul is. lation of God and an when she steps on; and her sudden the blotting out of as by the obliteration!

r earthly friend to sable, and that was ed, because he per- self, although when

debate, or takes up his pen for an essay on any subject terrestrial or celestial, finance or Heaven, he disproves his own theory. About two years ago this Abraham parted with his beloved Sarah at the gate of Greenwood, our modern Machpelah. After about a half century of Dr. Spear's depending on his wife the Lord took her. She had been to him not only the companion which every good wife is to a husband, but his literary criticism, his mental reinforcement, his reserve corps, his multiplication of intellectual and spiritual resources. When she stooped over to pick up something for her husband, and fell into the arms of Christ, who instantly transported her to her eternal residence, the blow was so stunning for her husband that had it been an apoplectic stroke it would not have more surprised him.

To take her mother's place the daughter to the rescue. Not physically strong if, she would come night after night lead her father's sleeplessness into ade, a tossing Atlantic hushed by a c of filial love. Next to his wife's

# MEDITATIONS

ON



# THE BIBLE HEAVEN.

BY

SAMUEL T. SPEAR, D.D.

FUNK & WAGNALLS.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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THE chapters composing this volume are simply a reproduction, with slight alterations, of a series of articles recently published in the *Independent* of New York City, and prepared when the author was passing through the deepest sorrow of his life. The dear wife with whom he had happily lived for more than half a century had just gone to her final rest in Heaven. Loving her when living, and not less when dead, and having the fullest confidence in the reality and soundness of her Christian character, he determined specially to study the Bible in regard to that glorious Heaven which it reveals, and which, as he felt assured, had become the eternal home of the best friend he ever had in this world, and, through the knowledge thus gained, to form his ideas of the lamented dead as existing in the spirit-realm.

The study brought comfort to one stricken heart ; and, hoping that a similar effect would

be produced in other hearts suffering from a like experience, the author concluded to give the results of the study in the columns of the *Independent*. As the articles appeared from time to time, he received letters from various parts of the country, expressing the satisfaction with which they had been read, and suggesting that, when completed, they should be republished as a book. They are now submitted to the Christian public, substantially as they were when first published.

The reader should bear in mind that each article, as originally published, was distinct and separate, and was constructed to tell its own story, independently of every other. The author did not assume that the reader of any one article would read the whole series, or more than that one; and hence he sought to make each article as complete and perfect as possible for its own purpose, within the limits allowable in a religious newspaper. This explains the unavoidable repetition of ideas which occurs in some of the chapters of this volume.

The author makes no claim to elaborate and learned exegesis. He had an entirely different end in view. What and all he attempts in the

Second Part—from which the title of the book is taken—is, in a series of meditations, to state what the Bible, upon a natural and common-sense construction of its language, says about the Heaven to which it so often refers, and which, as their future and eternal home, it so abundantly pledges to those who are “the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” Heaven, to one who studies it in the light of this Book, and is content to rest there until celestial experience shall make him wiser, is an exceedingly attractive theme. The Christian hopes, after death, to dwell there forever; and he surely should not deny to himself, while here, the spiritual luxury of knowing all he can about that Heaven. God has “brought life and immortality to light” in His Word; and it becomes the Christian to seek all the light that God has seen fit to give. He should not be ignorant by his own fault.

The Heaven thus revealed is presented to us in human language, appropriated by inspiration for this purpose; and this language is in many forms of description. Each form, considered relatively to human thought, has some special reason for its use; and when all these



forms are collected together in one aggregate, then, and only then, have we before our minds what God has been pleased to reveal in regard to Heaven. Then, and only then, do we really see the Bible Heaven. Though but part of the whole reality is thus brought within the domain of our present knowledge, that part makes Heaven superlatively desirable.

The elementary ideas of the heavenly life which one gathers from the study of the Word of God are these: 1. Mental existence after death, as opposed to extinction or destruction by that event. 2. The endless continuance of that existence, as opposed to any limitation of time. 3. The permanent retention of the soul's essential individuality and personality. 4. Actual residence in Heaven as a place of abode. 5. Residence there, after the resurrection, in what Paul calls the "spiritual body," fashioned like unto the "glorious body" of Christ. 6. A heavenly community or society, consisting in redeemed sinners of the human race and the holy angels. 7. The existence and operation of the government of God among and upon the members of this society. 8. The activity of our mental powers, and of the affections of the

heart, in the form of devout and holy exercises toward God, and of love toward the inhabitants of Heaven. 9. Exemption from all the miseries incident to our present existence. 10. Great enlargement of knowledge beyond that of the present life. 11. Sinless perfection of moral character. 12. Complete and perfect happiness. 13. The personal presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in His "glorious body," as the Mediator between God and men, as the Head of the Church, and as the "High Priest of our profession." 14. The heavenly state as related to, and the gracious reward of, Christian virtue on earth, and as the expression of God's approval and good pleasure toward those who in this world possessed this virtue.

These ideas, considered as elements of the Heaven made known in the Bible, underlie the language used in that Book, and are, moreover, such ideas as we can receive and appreciate on earth. It is not true that we are, while in this world, doomed to absolute ignorance of the heavenly world. The truth is far otherwise. Using the Bible as the guide of thought, and accepting the information there given, we know, or may know, more things about Heaven than

astronomers, by the aid of the telescope, ever did, or ever will, know about those shining spots that appear on our evening sky. The Biblical revelation of Heaven is greater in quantity, and far more important in quality, than the information supplied by the telescope in respect to the starry worlds. The former is the simpler medium of knowledge; and, being given upon the authority of God, it is more reliable in its source.

SAMUEL T. SPEAR.

BROOKLYN, N. Y., July 1, 1886.

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NOTE.—After the foregoing paragraphs were printed, and just before the whole volume passed into the binder's hands, the author was called to the experience of a new and added sorrow. His dearly beloved and only daughter—the wife of Mr. John P. Scrymser—who, upon the death of her mother, at once assumed the duties of his housekeeper, who in feeble health did her utmost to minister to his wants, to whom every line of this volume was read, and by whom most valuable suggestions and criticisms were made, was summoned by the providence of God to her heavenly home. Her intellectual and spiritual character made her companionship a sweet boon to him in many an otherwise desolate and lonely hour. Her personal attentions were constant, and ever loaded with the ministrations of the tenderest affection. She did "what she could." No one but the author himself can know how much he needed her presence; and no one else can know how faithfully she served her afflicted father in his declining years. But she also is gone—a blessing once had, but now forever lost in this world. Another jewel has been set in the diadem of heavenly glory. Her death has added another charm to the celestial life, and given to the author another reason to say with the apostle: "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

To the memory of this loving and lovely daughter, and to that of the dear wife who preceded her in death, the author dedicates these pages, hoping that, when it shall please God to call him hence, he may meet them in the building of God, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

SAMUEL T. SPEAR.

BROOKLYN, N. Y., October 7, 1886.

PART I.  
PRELIMINARY MEDITATIONS.

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CHAPTER I.

RELIGIOUS COMMON SENSE.

THE phrase "common sense," taken in its most comprehensive import, means those ideas and beliefs which, being common to the race, characterize it in all ages and countries. All men, so far as these ideas and beliefs are concerned, think essentially the same things, in the same way, and under the government of the same mental laws. However much they may differ in their acquirements, they are patterned after the same general model; and, hence, the study of one man, in the essential elements of his humanity, is the study of these elements in all men.

"Religious common sense" embraces the ideas and beliefs which men *naturally* have in regard to God and themselves, considered in their relations to each other, and in the duties, the hopes and fears which grow out of these

relations. Speculating atheists and infidels may, on paper, sneer at this sense, as a mere delusion, and attempt to laugh it out of this world ; yet the effort always has been, and always will be, a total failure. Religious common sense is anchored in human nature, and has its basis in the very structure of our mental and moral being. It passes from generation to generation with the facility, the certainty, and uniformity of a universal and indestructible fact. The stars are not steadier in their course than the continuance and descent of this sense. There is not the slightest danger that mankind, as a whole, will ever become a race of atheists.

The fundamental affirmation of this sense, found, in some form, and to some extent, wherever man is found, we have in the doctrine of a Supreme Being, one or more, distinct from nature, invested with the attributes of *personality*, and greatly superior to men. The human mind is so constructed that, upon being placed in such a world as this, and here moved to action by its excitants to thought, the doctrine of God is the natural outgrowth of that action. Whether the idea be innate and intuitive, or the result of rational processes, or both combined, is a matter of no consequence in relation to the question of its existence. Positive and absolute atheism, if real anywhere, is not the natural condition of the human mind.

The Bible, though a revelation from God and of God, never attempts formally to prove His existence. It assumes that "the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead," and on this ground declares that even the heathen, who are limited to the light of nature for their knowledge of God, "are without excuse" for their gross idolatries, and the corruption of their practical lives. What the Bible does is to explain God, especially in His moral attributes, as disclosed in the Gospel of Christ, and thereby correct the misapprehensions and errors of men in regard to Him. It dismisses the atheist by saying: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." The Bible wastes no time in formal argument with such fools.

The idea of God, as we find it in the world's sense, exists there in a group of ideas which define Him to human thought. He is the Maker, Supporter, and Governor of this world, at the head of all things, as the original, the infinite, and all-presiding Mind. All things are what they are because He has so made them. The order of nature is His appointment. The power and wisdom that salute human observation are His power and wisdom. The goodness and mercy, the justice and judgment, which



sweep over the field of existence, are an expression of His attributes. The relations between Him and men are, on their part, those of dependence and subjection to His law. He concerns Himself with men and with what they do, and can be pleased and also displeased with their conduct. They are not so small as to escape His notice, and He is not so far off that He cannot reach them with His power. Things do not move as they do without His observation or without His regulation. There is nothing in the universe stronger than His arm, and nothing more penetrating than His eye. Millions of men conspiring to dethrone Him would not make the slightest impression upon His supremacy. One blow from Him would crush them all. He is a God of powers, purposes, activities, and relations to men and things. He handles thunderbolts. The forces of nature are simply implements in His hands, and always obedient to His will.

This natural current of thought and feeling in regard to God has rolled on from age to age, carrying on its bosom numerous perversions and errors, yet always more or less carrying these elements of the world's sense of God. All lands show their presence. They go where man goes, and live where he lives, uniting themselves with all conditions of human existence. That existence never sinks below them,

and never rises above them. Society cannot outgrow them, and civilization cannot displace them. They have a permanent domicile on earth and among men. God Himself, in human thought, is the great Factor in this world's affairs. The world cannot detach itself from Him, and He will not detach Himself from it.

Man, by reason of this natural sense of God, supplies in himself the basis for the impressive appeals which the Bible makes to him. He does not need to be re-made and re-endowed before God can speak to him. He is fitted by the constitution of his nature and the results thereof to hear a special message from God, and to feel its force. Badly as that nature has been damaged by sin, and great as may be the errors in regard to God which have crept into the world, still men have not become brutes, and certainly not granite rocks, and have not gone so far from God as to be beyond the reach of revelation. There is always left a residuum of ideas and susceptibilities upon which a revelation can operate, and which, indeed, is the indispensable condition of its reception.

Nothing can exceed the vividness with which the one hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm sets before us the idea of God's omniscience and omnipresence, and of His direct contact with human affairs. Let us read the words :

“ O Lord, Thou hast searched me and known

me. Thou knowest my downsitteing and mine uprising ; Thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassesest my path, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid Thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me ; it is high ; I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit ? Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence ? If I ascend up into Heaven, Thou art there ; if I make my bed in Hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee ; but the night shineth as the day ; the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee."

This wonderful description of God fits right into the religious sense of man, anywhere, everywhere, in every age, and to that sense proves itself. We naturally and easily believe that God must be as great and marvellous a being as He is here described to be. We see no extravagance in the picture, and no occasion to doubt or dispute its truth. The language is not too brilliant for the reality.

And so, when the Bible says that "in the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth," and thus traces all existence but His own to His creating power; or when it says that "in Him we live, and move, and have our being;" or when it represents Him as the great Ruler over this world and all its affairs; or when it commands us to love and obey God—yes, when that Book thus speaks to us, it simply puts into language thoughts that men, from the natural operation of their own minds, are prepared to receive as true.

Human nature has an ear to hear, and a mind to accept, what the Bible says about God; and, for the most part, that nature needs no other proof than that of the thing said. The sense of justice in man fits him to receive and understand the idea of justice in God. The spiritual elements that constitute the essential nature of the former, furnish the condition for apprehending like elements in the latter. Our consciousness of our own personality enables us to conceive of God's personality.

The works of nature, all of which are in the Bible traced to God, illustrate, emphasize, and enforce what that Book says about Him. There are many respects in which we could not understand the Book at all, if we had no knowledge of these works. The order of nature supplies many impressive analogies to that

order which is revealed in the Bible. The God of the Bible and the God of nature thus appear to be the same being, possessing the same attributes, and holding the same relations to men. We see nothing in the latter to create any revulsion of thought against the former.

Nature and the Bible, as to what they teach in respect to that great Being, who is alike the source of both, move, to some extent, on parallel lines ; and, so far as they do so, their relation to each other is not one of antagonism, but rather of coincidence and harmony. The world's sense of God, as given by nature without a revelation, makes it a world to which a revelation can be addressed, and by which it can be received.

Moreover, in respect to the subject of religion as a system of beliefs to be practised, what is called the *supernatural* is, to the common sense of the race, really the *natural*. We search history in vain for a religious system that has stamped itself upon the faith and practice of men, operating upon them as a controlling power of comfort and hope, organizing itself into their personal and social life by forms, usages, and modes of worship, and at the same time professedly based on the authority and discoveries of unaided human reason. Philosophies in abundance have been the products of such reason, but religious systems never.

All the idolatries of antiquity claimed to be supernatural in their origin ; and the same is true of all the forms of modern heathenism. Such is the assumed character of Mohammedanism and Mormonism.

The religion of the Bible purports to have come into this world as a supernatural revelation from God through the agency of prophets and apostles, and especially Jesus Christ. These agents appeared before men, not as philosophers giving their opinions on the basis of merely natural reason, but as divinely appointed and divinely authenticated messengers through whom God Himself spake to man. "Thus saith the Lord" is their constant and universal claim, and hence the thing said is referred to as being the Word of God.

Whether the religion of the Bible is a supernatural revelation from God, is a fair question for reason to determine ; but the mere fact that it claims to be such is, in the general judgment of the race, anything but an objection to it. Those who make this claim an objection are themselves at war with reason as embodied in and expressed by the common sense of mankind. The truth is that, in religion, the supernatural is, according to this sense, really the natural. It is what men want as the indispensable condition of a religious system.

Something *from* God, impressed with His



authority, in which He speaks to man and invites man to speak to Him, and not merely something *about* God upon the authority of mere reason, is the only form in which religious ideas can be addressed to the human mind with controlling and comforting power. The world wants an *oracular* God—one that speaks by His own authority, and stamps that authority upon the thing said. This may be very foolish in the estimate of those philosophers who glory in their own reason ; yet such is the reason of the race, and such it has been in all ages.

So, also, in respect to the great problem of human existence after and beyond death—a problem that has always been before the world, and always will be, for the same reasons, and under the same general aspects—the natural sense of the race is, and ever has been, that the death of the body is succeeded by a continuous mental life, in which each person retains his own essential identity, and in which it will somehow be good or ill with him, according to the moral characteristics that marked him while here, and with which he retired from this earthly scene. This connects the two lives together, not simply in the order of time, but also in that of a moral sequence.

We see this in the hopes and fears which men naturally have when thinking of the great future. Conscious virtue sings in death, and

sin is pierced with the sharp sting of horror. The human soul is instinctively a prophet in respect to its own future. It has an inner voice which, though a whisper, is in effect a thunder-note. No one, in reasoning about the dead, ever imagined that their vices here would be of any advantage to them hereafter ; and no one thinks hopefully of the dead who does not connect that hope with their assumed virtues. It is the law of our nature thus to think and thus to reason.

The doctrine of the Bible is that God is not mocked ; that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap ; that he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption ; that he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting ; and that God will hereafter render to every one according to the deeds done in the body, whether the rendering be in the form of eternal life, or in that of "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish." On this point the Bible speaks most explicitly, without disguise, and without reservation ; and, in so speaking, it simply utters a thought which, so far as the principle is concerned, exists in the bosom of the race.

Immortality as a fact, and in that immortality retribution as a propriety, rank among the most universal thoughts of mankind. No religious system ever existed on earth from

which these ideas were wholly absent. The Bible says that moral order will rule in the final disposition of human affairs ; and the natural sense of the race says that it ought to rule, and expects that it will, and is hence prepared to receive and credit what the Bible says on this point.

Paul reasoned with Felix upon righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come ; and that voluptuous and sensual governor, being a man, and having the faculties and sensibilities of a man, trembled as a man. His official dignity did not, and could not, save the man from the commotion within him. That commotion shook the body of the man in spite of himself. Any man, having his character, and having these themes brought home to his inmost soul, will also tremble. The truth which naturally exists in man, and the truth which the Bible gives to him, when they coalesce in the same consciousness, and mutually support and affirm each other, make a sharp sword that pierces the soul to its profoundest depths. No one is stronger than this truth, and no one can keep up his courage in defiance of it. If we are guilty in the sight of our own eyes, and, because we are guilty, tremble, as did Felix, how then shall we stand before God, who is greater than our hearts and knoweth all things ?

Infidels and so-called freethinkers may, in

certain moods of mind, sneer at all religion, and, in so doing, sneer at the religious common sense of the race. They may treat with contempt all ideas involving the doctrine of God and their relations and duties to Him, involving the question of a supernatural revelation from Him, and involving the fact and the issues of a future life. But, sooner or later—if not in this world, then in the next—they will find out that this is a great mistake. Unfortunately for the success of their experiment, they happen to be men, made like all other men, subject to the same general necessities, conditioned by the same laws, and really wanting the same reliefs.

Religious ideas are not destroyed by being sneered at and ignored, any more than God is annihilated by being forgotten. They can stand any amount of sneering, and yet survive. The elements in human nature which cannot be alienated, and which form the basis of these ideas, live, and will live, whether heeded or unheeded; and nothing is needed but the presence of the proper circumstances to quicken these elements into action. The truth lives, and the day of its power will surely come in every man's experience. We cannot avoid this result, and yet retain the nature with which God has endowed us. One glance at God in the world of spirits and on the judgment throne will seal the lips of any caviller. One hour's

experience in that world will bring the most defiant infidelity to its senses.

No greater question was ever asked than that of the Philippian jailer: "What must I do to be saved?" No truer answer was ever given than that which fell from the lips of Paul: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Jesus Christ is not a superfluity, and the salvation offered by God through Him is not a superfluity, with which we can dispense without damage. Salvation in some form and by some hand—such a salvation as will put God and man into harmony, and guarantee to the latter the favor of the former—is the profoundest necessity of the race. The universal consciousness of sin, connected with the fearful looking for of judgment as the natural result thereof, makes salvation the one great want of man.

Christ, in His person, His offices, and work, alike on earth and in Heaven, is this salvation. "There is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Christ is the one way, the sufficient way, the only way, the divine way of going to Heaven; and if we reject this way, and die in such rejection, then we shall not go there. So saith the Word of God, and so it will be. Our treatment of Christ is hence a matter just as vital to us as our own salvation. Faith in Him and obedi-

ence to His Gospel mean eternal life. The rejection of Him means eternal death. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life ; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him." These are the words of Christ Himself ; and if we disregard them, then good were it for us if we had never been born.



## CHAPTER II.

### THE RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY.

THE great questions of life relate to the existence, the character, government, and providence of God, and to man considered as the creature of His power and subject to His law. What one shall eat and drink, and wherewithal he shall be clothed, where and how long he shall live, what shall be his position among men, whether he shall die rich or poor, known or unknown to fame—all these matters are of but trifling importance, when compared with the questions that relate to God and what man is in his relation to God, and what awaits him when he retires from this earthly scene.

Who is God? What are His attributes? What are His feelings toward the human race? Has He established a moral government over men, and if so, what are His requirements? Is there forgiveness with God for sinners, and if so, in what way may it be secured? What is man as the subject of His law, and what are his duties to God? What is death to man? Is there any future for him beyond death, and if

so, how long will it last, what will be his condition in that future, and what are the causes that will determine that condition ?

These are the supreme questions, and so appear to every one who properly considers them. There are none greater, and no others so great. They are of the deepest interest to every one, and confront all men with an imperative summons to thought. They have challenged thought in every age and country. They concern our practice. It is not immaterial whether they be answered or not.

The judgment of the race is, and ever has been, that mere reason exercising itself upon the field of nature, without any special help from God, is not adequate to the solution of these questions. Conclusive evidence of this judgment we have in the fact that no religious system has ever existed among men, and asserted its ascendancy over them, professedly based on the authority of mere reason. All the religions of antiquity, and all those of modern times, have alike claimed to be supernatural in their source, and have been so accepted, so far as accepted at all. These religions, upon their own showing, originally came into this world and spread themselves among men, not as the discoveries of reason, but as revelations from God through agents of His own selection and endowment.

Simple reason never yet constructed a religious system which men have accepted as authoritative, or which has had any prevalence or power among men. It has often protested against religious systems constructed on a different basis ; but it has never made one, and never will. The supernatural in religion is the only basis, as history abundantly shows, upon which religion can rest, and at the same time take hold of the heads and hearts of men, and sway them with an authoritative power. The world does not want, and will not have, a religious system that assumes for itself a different basis. "Let God speak and then let men hear," is the natural language of the race on this subject.

The human mind is *theistic* in the sense of operating toward God, and in that of being loaded with impressive thoughts in regard to Him ; but, in all its operations upon a purely natural basis, it stops short of the final mark. It does not go far enough to find a resting-place and satisfy itself. It does not get God near enough to answer its own wants. The philosopher who works on matter simply, whether in atoms or in worlds, at last leaves a chasm between him and God which he cannot fill. The metaphysician who studies, classifies, and names the phenomena of mind, does not get his explanation down to the bottom of things, and does not carry it to their absolute zenith.

There is a spirit world beyond, conceivable, suggested, thought of, with which neither the philosopher nor the metaphysician can make himself sufficiently familiar. The eye looks dimly into it. Startling possibilities flit through all this realm. Thought would like to go there, and feels as if it must do so. It hears the echo of distant truth, and wishes to know whence the sound came, and what it means. The common mind knows enough to ask more questions than it can answer, and more than science can answer. It wants to get nearer to God, and to get God nearer to it, than seems possible under the teaching of mere reason. That reason does not sufficiently bridge the gulf that intervenes between the two. Whether this was the original constitution of things in this world or not, it is the present fact as we find it.

The religion contained in the Bible adjusts itself to this fact. There is not a word in that Book that proceeds upon the hypothesis that its contents are the discoveries of reason, or were placed there by reason. The assumption of the Bible in regard to itself is just the reverse of this. "Thus saith the Lord" is the label which it puts upon its contents. The theory of the New Testament is that the Old Testament contains the oracles of God; that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;" that God "at sundry

times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets ;” that the sacred writings composing the Old Testament were “given by inspiration of God ;” in a word, that the Law and the Prophets and the Psalms came from God and are stamped with His authority, and are not the creations of human reason.

The Gospel of Christ, according to the New Testament, is “the glorious Gospel of the blessed God ;” and this Gospel “at the first began to be spoken by the Lord Himself, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him, God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will.” Christ did not appear before men simply as a dialectician, speaking to them the wisdom of mere reason ; but He did appear as a divine messenger who had come down from Heaven and assumed the fleshly robe of our common humanity. And when He ascended from earth to Heaven, He commissioned and endowed His apostles to teach and preach in His name. Saul of Tarsus was called to be an apostle by a supernatural voice from the skies, and the Gospel which he afterward preached he received, as he expressly says, “by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” He did not think it out by his own wisdom, and it was not taught

to him by others. It came to him from Christ by a special revelation.

This is what the Bible says of itself, placing its source far above the domain of reason and all the discoveries of science. The Bible, in short, assumes to be the Word of God, and as such speaks to men.

Now, whether this claim be true or not, is undoubtedly a proper question for reason to consider and determine. Reason has a right to look at the credentials of the Bible and ascertain what they prove, and should do so. Christ Himself appealed to His works in proof that He came from God. If reason, having instituted the inquiry, has answered it in the affirmative, then the man whose reason has done this, and come to this result, has found the ultimate religious authority for himself. How he reached the result, whether it took him a long time or only a short time, and whether he explored all the evidence, or only a part of it, is a matter of no consequence to him. Every man is bound to follow his best light; and if one's best light is that, for the reasons existing in his mind, the Bible is the Word of God, then that is sufficient for him, whether he sees all the reasons or not. It is sufficient for him that he understands God to be speaking to him in and through this Book.

The one thing, then, to be done with the

Book is to read it, to understand it as far as possible, and, alike with the head, and the heart, to bow to it as an ultimate and absolute authority on all the subjects of which it speaks. Chief Justice Marshall was one of the greatest judges this country ever produced ; and, as he sat on the bench of the Supreme Court of the United States, and held the Federal Constitution in his hands, he treated it as “ the supreme law of the land.” Its authority he never disputed ; and the only questions he ever raised in regard to it related to its meaning and application. He did not make that Constitution, and it was not his prerogative to change it, and was his duty to obey it.

And, in like manner, should the Bible be treated by every one who believes God to be its author. This faith, by its very terms, makes it “ the supreme law ;” and there is to be no question as to the truth of its teaching. Faith is not to be disputing its own affirmation. Having affirmed, it is to stand there and accept as true what the Bible declares to be true.

If this Book says that Christ died for our sins, then the saying is the best of all reasons for so believing. If it says that there is a Heaven and that there is a Hell, then this settles the question in respect to both. If it says that God will judge the world by that man whom He hath ordained, then faith must say the same

thing. If it says that there will be a resurrection of the dead, then faith must so believe.

God Himself is always good authority for whatever He affirms ; and reason never rises higher, and never acts more reasonably, than when it simply believes God. The question is not whether it can explain everything, or answer all possible objections, but whether the Bible puts its imprimatur upon a fact or a doctrine.

This attitude of mind toward the Bible as the supreme and final authority on all matters relating to religion, intensified and wrought into the very warp and woof of the soul, and thus living as a felt reality, is an indispensable condition of the power of the Bible to control thought, to sanctify the life, and impart comfort to the heart. We must believe with unhesitating confidence, believe right on, believe always, and believe forever, or we shall know but little of this power.

Those who really know this power are not the disputatious cavillers, not the self-wise doubters asking more questions than they can answer, and not the open and undisguised infidels, but the simple-minded children of faith who have acquired the happy and hallowed art of being content with what the Bible says, and to whom a single promise in that Book is worth more than all the speculations of the wisest men



who ever lived. This so fills their minds and absorbs and occupies their thoughts that they have no room for anything else. The vexations of thought that trouble others pass by them, either unseen or unheeded if seen. They march through the world, and march to the grave, and march into eternity, guided as to what they believe and expect by an authority they never dispute. They take this authority with them in every step of life, and at last lie down in death with it.

These are the happy men, the happy Christians, who, whether they are scholars or not, know how to believe, and in this sense are the children of Abraham. This great secret of the Lord is with them and in them. These are the men whom the martyr's stake does not frighten, who can cross the raging flood without alarm, to whom dying imparts good cheer, and who by faith read their title clear to mansions in the skies. Reason is not, and God is, their supreme and sovereign guide. His authority in the Book Divine settles all questions for them. Here they rest, and here find peace and comfort as nowhere else. A great boon comes to the soul when in this weary journey of life it finds rest in God. Heaven then begins, as the sweet foretaste of the richer and larger glory that awaits that soul in another life.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE THREE RELIGIOUS WANTS.

THE fundamental religious wants of the human mind, resulting from its constitution taken in connection with the facts of our present existence, may be arranged into three classes. We may not always think of these wants, or always feel their pressure, yet they are real, and, in proper circumstances, will assert their presence and clamor for relief.

1. The first of these wants is that of *intercourse* between God and man. Men may and often do act as if there were no God, yet speculative atheism is not, never has been, and never will be, the creed of this world. The idea of God, in some form and to some extent, is found in all lands, among all races, in all ages, and under all conditions of human life.

God, according to this idea, is a great being, vastly greater than men, able to do them good and do them harm, capable of being pleased or displeased with them, and holding important relations to them. Such a being—at least one, if not more—no matter by what names called,

exists in the world's general thought. We call Him God.

Nature shows the existence, power, and intelligence of God, and to some extent, His moral character, yet the God of nature is a silent being, and what nature actually teaches in regard to Him is only what we infer from it. The book of nature is, moreover, a ponderous and difficult book for us to read, and the more we attempt to read it the more we feel the need of some other book in which God first speaks and man hears, and then, upon its authority, man speaks, while God hears.

A God who never talks to us, and to whom we can never talk, is so far above and beyond us that we fail to get access to Him. We may think of Him as an incomprehensible mystery, but we cannot make His acquaintance, and communion with Him we cannot have. What the world wants is something that will put God and men in the relation of social intercourse with each other. "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth," is the language of the human heart, when the eye of thought is turned toward God.

The Bible responds to this want, as nature does not and cannot. God, in the Bible, breaks the silence of nature, and, in the language of earth, tells us who He is, what He is, what are His attributes, what He has done, what are

His relations to us, what are His purposes and plans in regard to us, what are His feelings toward us, what is His law for us, and what conduct on our part pleases and what displeases Him. He ceases to be a silent God and comes before men with a message to them. The Bible is not more truly a revelation *from* God than it is a revelation *of* God. He makes Himself known in His Word.

This social attitude toward us, inaugurated and established on God's part by the Bible, invites corresponding attitudes on our part toward Him. We are to hear and believe what He says in His Word, and do what He commands. We are to give Him our confidence and affection, to seek favors at His hands, to be grateful for favors received, and submit with cheerfulness and resignation to His providence. We are to be the friends of God, as was Abraham. We are to walk with God, as did Enoch. We are to talk with Him and to Him, "as seeing Him who is invisible." He is to be present in our minds as the habitual guest and companion of thought. If we pray to Him, our prayer is to be a devout conversation with the great Jehovah, not as a God afar off, but as present in the very room and at the very spot where we pray, and present there to hear our prayer, whether made in the form of words or not.

These social attitudes on the part of man

toward God are invited, facilitated, and commanded by His attitude toward us as set forth in the Bible. The communion is real on both sides, and in that communion one of the deepest wants of our nature finds its relief.

All experimental religion is essentially a *social* action of the soul toward God, either in hearing what He says, or in paying some tribute of the heart to Him. Those who scorn the Bible as the suggester and guide of this intercourse, and prefer to resort to physical laws and forces, make a grave mistake. God can be better and more easily understood in His Word than anywhere else. It is His Word especially that giveth light to this otherwise dark world. It is His Word that helps alike the head and the heart when they are seriously engaged with God. If one wants to hear a message from Him, the best thing he can do is to read the Bible and find it there. If one wants to send a message to Him, the best thing he can do is to follow the direction of the same Bible. The Book Divine is equally good for either purpose.

2. A second want, not less urgent, and not less common to the race, grows out of the *consciousness of sin*, as involving a moral rupture with God, a departure from Him, and an exposure to the frown of His justice. How shall man be just with God? is the question which this consciousness has in every age placed on

the lips of humanity. This is one of the oldest and most universal questions of the race ; and mere reason cannot see enough and prove enough to supply the needed answer. It cannot show that the sinner's repentance will meet the exigency.

If we reason from the justice of God as one premise, and man's ill desert as the other, then what we do is to awaken our fears, and not our hopes. The sacrificial altars that, through all the centuries of the past, have smoked with sin-offerings, show not only the gravity of the question, but the deep and enduring sense of mankind that something is needed to set things right between the soul and God, and put the two into harmony. Every religious system that men have consented to receive, has undertaken to solve the sinner's problem, and proceeded upon the theory that God Himself is the only being who can solve it.

Not one of these systems has ever pretended to rest simply on the light of nature as interpreted by mere reason. Such a pretense would be fatal to its acceptance for the purpose in hand. The sense of the race is, that God Himself must interpose, and afford the needed relief, in some way not known to the ordinary laws and operations of nature.

The Bible, in giving its solution of the sinner's problem, sets before us the person, the

mission, and the work of Christ. Paul states the idea in these simple words : “ This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” Christ said of Himself that He came to seek and to save that which was lost. He claimed to be a divine person coming down from Heaven, and here wrapt in the robes of humanity ; and the one purpose for which He came here, lived here, died here, rose from the dead here, and then ascended into Heaven, is the salvation of sinners. “ God,” according to His teaching, “ so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” The doctrine of Paul as to the result, we have in these words : “ Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The doctrine of the whole Bible is that Christ is the Mediator between God and men ; that, in this character, He suffered and died for sinners, the just suffering for the unjust ; that these sufferings and this death, in respect to those who receive Christ by faith, are efficacious for the purpose of salvation ; and that the whole supernatural procedure of providence, from the entrance of sin into our world to the birth of Christ, and then from His birth to His ascension into Heaven, including in Christ the most mar-

vellous life ever lived on earth, is the great gratuity planned and executed by God Himself for the salvation of sinners.

The facts and the doctrine of Christ's life and work are thus set over against the fact of sin and its peril, and in the former we find God's remedy for the latter. The Bible does not leave the shadow of a doubt to rest on this point. Whatever else may be obscure or mysterious, there is no obscurity or mystery here. The Gospel which came into the world through Christ, is "the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth." That Gospel is a remedial system; and by it the whole emergency created by sin is completely met.

Hear that, ye children of sin and sorrow!  
Believe that, ye inquirers for the way of life!  
Ally yourselves by faith with the Son of God,  
and then dismiss your fears, and proceed to the hope of glory. This will settle the whole question between God and your souls, and put the two in the relation of eternal harmony; and there is no other way known among men by which this question can be settled. It is God's way of saving sinners, and hence must be man's way of being saved.

3. The third religious want, also common to the race, grows out of the fact of *mortality*. If we lived always in this world we should have no occasion to ask any questions about death.



The fact, however, is that we live here but a short time, and then disappear by death, and never come back to tell what has happened. What, then, does happen at death? Do we survive this event? If so, where do we live, and what are we after death? Has our life on earth anything to do with our condition and destiny in another life?

These questions have occupied human thought ever since the world began, and will until it shall end. They can never become obsolete. Every man wants a faith which embraces and explains death. No one can always keep death out of his thoughts; and when he thinks of it he wants to know what death means—not in its physical causes, not in its effects on the body, but in the consequences that are to follow thereafter. This question, while to mere reason beset with grave difficulties, is certainly too great to be dismissed with a sneer. He who cracks jokes over death simply proves himself to be a monster.

The Bible knows just what the world's questions are on this subject, and meets them with its own answer. This answer contains the following information:

(1) That the wreck of the body which death makes does not destroy the soul, but that the latter, surviving this event, lives on forever.

(2) That the moral state in which one is when he dies, whether good or bad, will affect his

condition and destiny in the life which reaches beyond death.

(3) That those who receive the Gospel of Christ and die in the faith thereof, will be admitted into Heaven, and there have a blessed and holy immortality.

(4) That those to whom the Gospel has been offered, but who are rejecters of its salvation, and die in this state, will, after death, "go away into everlasting punishment."

Such is the substance of what the Bible says in regard to the life after death. It brings life and immortality to light, subject to these conditions, and under these forms of thought; and in this sense, and to this extent, it explains the immortality which it affirms. It goes beyond the simple fact of endless existence, and characterizes that existence, and also shows its relation to our prior existence in time and on earth. The information which it supplies on this subject is inexpressibly grand and inexpressibly awful—grand in respect to those who so live here as to be received into Heaven hereafter, and awful in respect to those who do not so live.

The Bible distinguishes between the two classes, alike in character and in the destiny which it respectively assigns to them. The contrast which it makes between them is the broadest that can be conceived. The Bible immor-

tality is one of rewards and punishments, founded on the deeds which have been done in the body. Both phases of this fact are disclosed, and that, too, with equal explicitness and certainty. The Book Divine declares that it shall hereafter be well with the righteous and ill with the wicked ; and this broad distinction is one of the arguments by which it seeks to influence our conduct while on earth, and before we actually enter upon the scenes of the future life. The God of the Bible is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. If he sows to the flesh he shall of the flesh reap corruption, and if he sows to the Spirit he shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

Intercourse with God, in which He speaks to us and we speak to Him ; salvation as a remedy for the necessities created by the fact and the consciousness of sin ; information in respect to the sequel that awaits us after death—these are the fundamental religious wants of the race ; and to them the Bible responds upon the authority of God. It puts Him in communion with us and enables us to put ourselves in communion with Him. It gives us the salvation of Christ as the remedy for sin. It explains death to us in the consequences which are to ensue after this life is ended.

The Bible, in reference to these wants, does for man what reason cannot do. It is the polar

star of life. If we shall have the wisdom to sail by it, the voyage will be pleasant and hopeful, and will at last end in the port of eternal peace. If we shall live and die without this wisdom, we shall commit the greatest mistake that can be conceived. Nothing can ever be a compensation for such a mistake.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE MORTAL APPOINTMENT.

DEATH, though common in the history of the race, and unimpressive to the casual and uninterested observer, is, nevertheless, to the family in which it occurs, an appalling event. In that circle live the strongest and most enduring attachments of earth ; and the blow is felt there, if nowhere else. Survivors, filled with grief and sorrow, sit under the shadow of a sore bereavement. The tenderest sensibilities of the heart are lacerated. A dear friend—husband or wife, parent or child, brother or sister—is snatched away, and hidden in the grave, to be remembered, but seen and heard no more. But for the kindly relief afforded by time, the remainder of life would be almost joyless.

Death, to the person who dies, is a strange event. He never died before, and never will again. He never talked with any one who has died. The result to his body, and to all the connections and relations with earth established through that body, he understands ; but here his knowledge ends, and just here the mystery

to thought begins. He cannot project his experience to the other side of death until he gets there himself. He wants to know more, or at least to believe more, than he can know or believe on his own experience ; and he can consult no one whose experience will give the needed knowledge. He is confronted by an event over which hang the densest shades, and, if he has his reason, is saluted by questions to which he wants an answer. They dart in upon him from all points of the horizon.

To say that death is a *natural* event, a part of the constitution and course of nature, and occurs under its laws, and that, like every other event, it has a cause, and that, with the presence and action of that cause, it comes to pass, may all be very well as a philosophy ; but it falls far short of the exigency. The dying man understands all this ; and yet it does not solve his questions, nor those of surviving and weeping kindred.

Such a cold and barren answer never cheered a heart or healed a wound. There is no soothing balm in an irresistible force to which one submits because he must. If one has lost a friend, there is no comfort in knowing that the law of gravitation killed that friend, or that he was stricken down by a thunderbolt, or that he perished amid polar snows. The physical causes of death contain no Gospel for the soul.

Now, it is just here, in this utter failure of experience and of mere philosophy to give us the wisdom we want in regard to death, that the Bible steps in and pours its light upon an event so strange to the man who dies, and so afflicting to the survivor. The Book Divine does not talk to us about the laws of nature or the causes which destroy life ; but, passing on beyond and much higher, it at once informs us that death is in the world by a necessity which God Himself has ordained. "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," is what He said to our first father, appointing death for him and for all his descendants. "It is appointed," says the Bible, "unto men once to die." In God "we live, and move, and have our being," says the same Book ; and, if so, then death comes from God, and is as much His appointment as is our life. He that "giveth life and breath" taketh away that life and breath.

The day, the place, and the manner of death are appointed by God Himself ; and no one's heart stops beating a moment too soon or a moment too late. The organic functions on which life depends, though not subject to our will, are subject to His will. The sentence of death is His sentence, not ours, and not that of the laws of nature, except as these laws are used to give effect to His will. Death, in a

word, is a part of that wise providence by which God regulates and governs the affairs of this world. Such is the Bible view.

And in the light of this view, it is alike our wisdom and our duty to accept the appointment with submission and resignation, whether weeping over our kindred dead, or ourselves walking through the valley and shadow of death. It is God's will that our stay on earth should be transient, and that we should leave this world by death. He has organized, and conducts our life on this principle. He never intended that earth should be our final home. His will we cannot successfully resist.

Infinite intelligence and infinite goodness made the appointment; and whether we can understand its reasons or not, we cannot doubt its wisdom. "Not my will, but Thine be done," is, on this subject, the proper attitude and homage of the soul. Any other is a contest, and, while changing nothing, and imparting no comfort, is essentially a war with God. David acted as a parent when he prayed that the life of his child might be spared; and he acted as a wise man and a saint when he cheerfully bowed to the will of God as made known by the death of that child.

The light of the Bible is not confined to the single idea that our mortality is the appointment of God. This is but one in a group of



ideas. There is another divine appointment which is just as real as that of death. The Bible informs us that our soul-life, in its nature, basis, and perpetuity, is distinct from our body-life, and that the former passes on beyond the terminus of the latter. This settles the question of our mental existence beyond and after death, and opens to thought another sphere in which that existence will be as real as it ever was here. Death does not touch that existence with any destructive effect. The same God that made the body mortal has made the mind immortal.

The materialism which confounds the distinction between mind and matter, and traces all the wonderful functions of the former to the properties of the latter, finds no place and no support in the Word of God. That Word discloses and affirms the glorious doctrine of a future life for the soul ; and, believing the testimony, we have no occasion to think of death as the end of our conscious being. God wills that we shall survive that wreck. Our mental immortality is His appointment, and real for that reason. We did not put our souls into mortal bodies ; but He did. We do not and cannot remove those souls from these bodies ; but He does when He sends death to call them to other scenes. They go away at His command, and death is His set time for their departure.

The Bible does not stop here, but goes still further. It has more thoughts for humanity than the fact of mortality and the fact of immortality, as appointments of God. It states to us the moral conditions of conduct and character here, which, by compliance therewith on our part, will make our future life a state of ineffable blessedness and glory, and, in these conditions and the result of such compliance, shows us the one grand errand for which we were sent into this world. The Bible has a Heaven in it, even for sinners, if they accept the salvation which it reveals ; and it assures them that, if they do accept this salvation, they shall at death be received into that Heaven and dwell there forever. The description which it gives of Heaven exhausts the power of language. Nothing, to a being capable of happiness and holiness, can be more desirable than the Bible Heaven. We have no thoughts with which to conceive of a better state ; and we equally have none with which to conceive of a worse state than that which awaits us after death if, while here, we refuse to obey God and conform our conduct to His will.

Our present life, according to the Bible, is a state of moral probation in which we form the characters that will determine our future and eternal destiny. It, hence, appeals alike to our hopes and our fears, and warns us to shun the

evil and seek and secure the good. It urges us to look not at the things which are seen and temporal, but at the things which are not seen and eternal. Its motives to action are drawn mainly from another life. What we are to gain or lose here is but a trifle when compared with what we are to gain or lose hereafter.

Human wisdom, in the light of mortality as to our body-life, and of immortality as to our soul-life, and of both lives considered in their relation to each other, is comprehensively summarized in the following words of the Son of God: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal."

If we follow this direction, we will have no occasion to regret the day of our birth, or the day of our death, or the brevity of our stay on earth. All will be well with us. If we do not follow the direction, then good for us were it if we had never been born. That life which is spent without securing the true riches, is at last an awful failure. It loses the supreme good. Nothing can make it a success. Its sun goes down in darkness. It is cheered by no hope as it ends, and greeted by no joy in another

world. Alas! alas! for the stupendous failure! Is it possible that one living and dying where the Bible has shed its light can commit so great a mistake?

## CHAPTER V.

### THE FINAL DEPARTURE.

ONE of the forms in which inspiration presents the idea of death, is that of a departure. Thus, in reference to the death of Jesus, it is said that He "knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father." "It is expedient for you," said He of Himself, "that I should go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send Him unto you." The connection shows that Christ was here speaking of His personal retirement from the world by death, and, after His resurrection, by His ascension into Heaven.

Paul, in his Epistle to the Philippians, wrote as follows: "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor; yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." The apostle here refers to death as a departure, and ex-

presses a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which he deemed better for him than to continue his domicile on earth, and in a body of flesh and blood. In his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, the apostle said that while "we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord," and added that he was "willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." The method of attaining such absence from the body is by death, which, in order to realize this end, must involve a departure or removal of the soul from the body it once inhabited.

The same apostle, expecting soon to die by martyrdom, wrote as follows in his Second Epistle to Timothy: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 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 also that love His appearing." The apostle here speaks of his approaching death as a departure. "The time," he says, "of my departure is at hand."

The elementary idea of a departure is a change of place. One who departs does not remain where he was, but removes or is removed therefrom, and goes elsewhere, and hence occupies

a new locality. We are familiar with such changes. They occur every day. Seldom does one who has reached adult years die where he was born. The present life is largely a series of departures. Time scatters families.

All these changes of place do not, however, dislodge us from the present world, or from the body with which we tenant it. None of them are final, and in none of them do we cease to be dwellers on earth. The final departure comes once, and but once, in the history of every man ; and when it comes it terminates his earthly sojourn, and closes his personal connection with the world through the medium of the organized body, which, as such, is destroyed by death. At that moment, he, in this sense, quits the world, and never resumes his place in it as an actor or a sufferer. His journey on earth and in the body is ended. He may be a Washington, a Lincoln, or a Grant, and be remembered and honored for ages ; but he will be seen and heard no more as an inhabitant of earth.

The law of our present existence is that of a most intimate and wonderful union between an organized material body, invested with the properties and functions of life, and a self-conscious, immaterial, and intelligent soul or spirit, that in its nature and powers is distinct from the body. This union continues during the whole of our present life. The most finished

and complex of all material organisms is a human body ; and a fitting tenant thereof is a human soul. They are adapted to each other. The body was made for the soul, and the soul for the body, and both by the same Architect. The body localizes the soul, and constitutes its earthly domicile. The soul uses the body as its instrument.

To each soul is assigned one, and but one, body. That body is its body in distinction from all other bodies, and all other forms of matter. The soul lives and acts there as it lives and acts nowhere else. It is the body that adjusts the soul to a citizenship on earth ; and it is through the body that souls enter into the society of each other and serve each other during life. The body is present and used during the whole of that marvellous history which intervenes between the rudiments of our soul-life in infancy, and the full development of that life in mature manhood. It shares as a servitor and an instrument in all this history.

The exact mode of the union between these two distinct elements of our complex being is and ever must be a profound mystery. What we know is the fact itself, together with the utilities and relations that grow out of it, and with this we must be content. Every effort to carry thought beyond this point ends only in absolute failure.



It is equally a law of death that, when the mortal part of man is smitten with the final blow, and all the functions of organic life come to an end, the immaterial and immortal part shall at that moment depart from the body and go elsewhere, to be and to act in another sphere and in new relations. This change of place occurs at death, not occasionally, but always. Dying is to the soul a departure from the body, not an extinction. God Himself calls away the soul by death, and the soul thus called leaves the body for another clime and another dwelling-place. Death is as much the appointment of God as is life, and this specific law of the soul's departure at death is a law which he has established, and never fails to carry into effect.

We did not establish the law, and do not execute it, and cannot resist it. The union between the body and the soul is the work of God, and the severance of this union at death is also the work of God. Neither fact exists by any inherent necessity in either body or soul, independently of that necessity which God Himself has ordained. As the soul did not originally put itself into a body, and does not keep itself there, by any exercise of its own power, so it does not leave the body and go elsewhere by its own power. God did the first work and He does the second. The whole ar-

rangement is by His wisdom, and its execution by His power. Man is subject to it, but not the author of it, and cannot change it.

“She is gone,” said the physician who had placed his ear to the chest of a godly woman that had just fallen to the floor, and whose heart had suddenly stopped beating. But a moment before she was in life, in the body, and in the dwelling she had graced so long, and among those whom she had loved and served and cheered with her presence. Is she really gone? Can it be? Has one fleeting moment made so great a change? Yes, “she is gone.” There lies the body just where it fell, stretched out in absolute helplessness, with every bone, blood-vessel, and nerve still there; but she is not there. That eye no longer gleams with her thought. That cheek no longer reddens with her affections. That tongue no longer speaks her words. That hand no longer moves at her command. When that body shall be shrouded and coffined and buried she will not be there, with it or in it, and when nature’s chemistry shall disintegrate and at last destroy the organic form, she will not be there to feel the change, or share in the mortal wreck. Her character will not be there. Her affections will not be there. Her essential, mental, and moral personality will not be there.

“Dust to dust” was not spoken of the soul.

That is distinct from the body, alike in its nature, its properties, and its destiny. The destruction of the body brings no destruction to the soul. We bury bodies, but not souls. Bodies moulder and decay, but spirits live.

That death, terrible as it may seem in anticipation, and destructive as it may be to the body, is to the soul a departure, and not the extinction of its conscious being, or even a suspension of its activity, and that our dear friends who have died in the Lord, and whom we have buried in the deepest sorrow over our own loss, have simply left the earthly house of their tabernacle and gone to dwell in the building of God, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, and hence that these loved and lost ones were never more living than when dead, and that perchance we may meet them on the other shore—all this surely is a very pleasant thought to have when living, and to have when dying, especially as it is not a mere speculation of reason, but the view of death which Paul had, and which the Word of God sustains. The Bible authorizes us to believe that, in dying, we simply leave one world and pass into another. We shall not go alone. God Himself will be with us at that moment. It may be that angels will attend us in the final exodus. If our lives on earth have been such as to bring us within the scope of the Gospel promise, then

God, at death, will welcome us to the abodes of eternal glory.

To the Christian, dying is simply going to Heaven. He dies that he may go there. Death works no harm to him. His peace is made with God through Christ, and this secures an immortality of blessedness. He is an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ, and the inheritance reserved for him in Heaven is incorruptible and undefiled, and fadeth not away. He surely loses nothing, but gains much, by dying. He goes where all his spiritual hopes on earth are fully realized. What he has sought he attains at last. The Bible Heaven is a glorious world to go to, and in which to dwell forever. Once safely there, we shall not regret our departure from this world, or have any desire to return to it.

It is true that we cannot, while tenants of earth, fully understand what we shall be ; yet the disclosures of the Bible in respect to the immortality of those who love God, and receive and obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, clothe that immortality with superlative charms. It is so good and so great as to be called " a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." The reality that lies behind these words can have no parallel on earth.

Let death, then, as a departure, teach us how to live while here, so that when we hear the call

to depart, it may be in peace, and for Heaven. Happy the man who can hear this call with cheerfulness, and pass to the other world with the assurance of a well-grounded hope. Happy the man who, as he departs, can say: "I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." Happy the man from whose experience the sting of death has been removed, and who, as he passes through the valley and shadow of death, fears no evil, and has no occasion for fear. Happy the man who, as he breathes his last, can exclaim: "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" Happy the man to whom the Gospel promise guarantees the prize immortal, who leaves this world with no unforgiven sin to lash his memory, and who goes to the next world to meet his God in peace, and join the society of angels and of just men made perfect.

Yes, thrice happy that man! His is the supreme wisdom. An earthly life to him, whether long or short when measured by years, has answered its purpose. The sequel thereof is the grandest conceivable.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE SUSPENDED INTERCOURSE.

MAN'S life on earth consists, in part, of a purely animal or *body*-life, and, in part, of a purely mental or *soul*-life. These two lives are not merely different aspects of essentially the same thing. Matter, whether vitalized or not, is not mind ; and mind, whether incarnated or not, is not matter. Between them there is nothing in common, except the fact of existence by divine power.

There is no resemblance between the contraction of a muscle by which a limb is mechanically moved, and a process of reasoning by which an inference is drawn ; or between the digestion of food by the stomach and an exercise of conscience approving or condemning an act ; or between the circulation of the blood by the heart and the mental intuition of first truths ; or between the characteristic properties of matter and those of mind.

The inference is irresistible that there is, in nature, a fundamental difference between the body of man and his soul. Nothing can be

more unreasonable than to confound them, or make them essentially one and the same thing.

The body, during the period of its union with the soul, is simply an *instrument* and special *locality*, through and in which the latter acts and is acted upon, and is, hence, its servitor for these purposes. Our knowledge of souls, by experience, is confined to them, considered as existing in this relation. We have no experience that goes beyond this point. The fact that the body in this life is the home of the soul, and that the latter uses the former, and is in various ways affected by it, is all that comes within the circle of our experimental knowledge.

One of the forms of this use is that of *intercourse* between souls, appearing in mutual identifications and recognitions, and in the transmission and reception of ideas, influences, and impressions. This intercourse in the present life is conducted through symbols of thought and feeling ; and all these symbols operate only through organized living bodies. This is the invariable law which God has established and we cannot change. The arrangement is sufficient for all the practical purposes of our present social life.

This intercourse of souls, through bodies, is necessarily subject to whatever *limitations* may be imposed thereby. The eyes, the ears, and the organs of speech are the chief instruments

of such intercourse ; and they are not constructed to operate at long distances. Two persons may easily converse with each other, if in each other's immediate presence ; but they cannot do so at the distance of a hundred miles. We may supplement our bodies by artificial helps, as the postal system of letters or the telegraphic dispatch, or by the use of the telephone ; but these appliances are merely facilities for doing through the body what we otherwise could not do. They do not dispense with our bodies, or act independently of them, or repeal the natural limitations imposed by them.

Human intercourse through the body is, moreover, often *temporarily* suspended by the absence of its necessary conditions, and then resumed with the presence of these conditions. One goes to his place of business, or is absent on a journey, and, while thus absent, does not expect to see or speak to the members of his family left at home. Such suspensions of intercourse, being regarded as merely temporary, and always accompanied with the expectation that the intercourse will in due season be resumed, involve no embarrassment or perplexity of thought, and make no special impression on the heart.

Friends are thus separated, without thinking of themselves as permanently lost to each other. Time will bring them together again. They



have not spoken their last farewells. In their thoughts there are days, weeks, months, and even years, yet to come, in which they will enjoy the interchanges of a cherished and delightful communion. This anticipation keeps them quiet, cheerful, hopeful, and happy.

How, then, does the matter stand when the intercourse between dear friends, alike tenderly loving and loved, is interrupted by death? How is the intercourse thereafter affected by this event? This is a grave question to both thought and feeling.

As to the friend dead, and by dying withdrawn from the body once inhabited by him, we can, from experience, give no answer to this question. Whether he survives the event, and, if so, how he is affected, and what thoughts or feelings, if any, he has in respect to the dear friends left, are matters that pass entirely beyond the domain of our present experience. The dead do not come back to give us their experience; they do not speak to us from the other side of death; and hence we cannot, from their testimony, get the faintest intimation of what has happened to them.

But, as to the friends surviving and left behind, mourning and weeping hearts, by millions and hundreds of millions, can tell the sad and sorrowful story, and have been telling it in all the ages of human history. The story is

essentially the same on all lips, because the result is substantially the same in all hearts. Kings on their thrones and peasants in their cottages tell it. Learning and ignorance alike tell it. There is not a family on the globe to which death is permanently a stranger, and hence not one that is permanently a stranger to this story.

The conspicuous feature of this story—that around which most of its items revolve, and which imparts its own coloring to them all—consists in the one great, continuous, oppressive, appalling, and ever-present fact that the friends living have absolutely no means of intercourse with the friend dead, and never will have in this world. Wherever they go, and whatever they do, this fact stares them in the face. They cannot run away from it or forget it. They may think of the friend dead ; and they do and must ; but they cannot talk to him, and he cannot talk to them. Intercourse with him in this world came to an end when he died. He said his last words to survivors, and they said their last words to him. A week has elapsed ; a month has gone ; and now years have fled since these final words were spoken, and yet the silence—the complete and unbroken silence between the living and the dead—remains just what it was at the moment of death.

The living may aid memory with accurately

executed pictures of the dead ; they may gaze upon these pictures with a melancholy pleasure ; they may see a thousand things to suggest them as they once were ; they may dream about them in the visions of the night, and in these visions see them and talk with them ; but all this does not put them in actual intercourse with the dead. They may, by the lapse of time, become accustomed to the afflictive silence and absence, and this may somewhat relieve the pungency of the original grief ; but this opens no communion between the living and the dead.

Suspended intercourse in this world remains as the abiding and permanent fact, hanging over the mind as a sore and heart-searching bereavement, and casting its dark shadow on every track of life. We can devise no substitute for this lost intercourse ; and whenever our thoughts recur to the friend gone, we feel compelled to accept the absence by a necessity that we cannot resist. We would break this awful silence and resume the intercourse if we could, but we cannot.

The reason of the fact, which is so burdensome to thought and feeling, lies in the complete destruction of the body, as an instrument of intercourse, made by death, and in the fact that at death the soul leaves the body, and is hence no longer there to use it, or to be affected by it. If we keep the body in our dwelling,

and, by embalmment, seek to preserve it against the law of decay, this will not undo what death has done. If we bury it in the dust of the earth, it will there go back to dust, and soon lose even the form of an organized body.

The simple truth is, that a human body dead is absolutely useless, as an instrument of intercourse between the living and the soul that once dwelt in that body ; and, hence, whether it be buried or unburied, whether it be dissolved into its primitive dust or still retains its organic form, it has ceased to perform the function which in life was assigned to it. We may enshroud it in the richest robe ; we may cover it with flowers of sweetest perfume ; we may entomb it with all the honor which affection can bestow ; we may mark the spot where it rests with the costliest marble ; but all this will not restore to that body its lost function.

The soul is gone, and life is gone. Nothing remains but inanimate matter ; and, in this condition, all its prior services to the soul are gone. It is no longer the earthly house of the soul's tabernacle ; and we have no power to establish any other tabernacle for that soul, or to supply any other method of doing what was once done through the body now dead. Jesus could reanimate the dead, and put words on lifeless lips ; and He did so in the days of His flesh ; but we cannot do it.

There is a sense in which this fate of the body—once so intimately allied with our mental life, once so highly honored as the guest chamber of an immortal spirit, once so important as the instrument of intercourse between spirits, so wonderfully constructed as the most perfect material organism known on earth—seems a strange and even repulsive fate.

Why should such a body, framed with so much care, and standing at the very zenith in all the forms of organic life, last for so brief a period? Why should its continuance in life be dependent on so many conditions, the absence of any one of which will be fatal? Why should its journey through life be subject to so many perils, any one of which may at any time deal the final blow? Why should death have so many agencies with which to do its work? Why should infants die by millions before they have secured any apparent end in being born? Why should youth and early manhood, in all the strength and vigor of life, just equipped for its purposes, seemingly sink into untimely graves? Why should the bloom of existence be nipped by such early frosts? If infancy, childhood, youth, and manhood be spared, why should old age, and with it decay and death, come so soon?

If rocks and mountains last so long, why this short and fleeting day for man? Why is he

hurried away so soon after coming here ? Why do so many mourners go about the street in every city, and the pangs of bereavement blast so many hearts ? Why is the sweet intercourse of earth so often interrupted and broken by the hand of death ? Why do multitudes die when to us there seem so many reasons for their living ? In short, why this prodigality in construction, only to be succeeded by an equal prodigality of destruction ?

One may, without impiety or rebellion, wander off into the region where such inquiries will dart in upon him from all points of the horizon ; and that, too, in spite of himself. The best answer mortals can give is devoutly to say : “ Even so, Father ; for so it seemeth good in Thy sight.” We shall have to come to this at last, in order to obtain composure and serenity of mind ; and, if so, we had better begin with it. It is the true philosophy for the soul.

That man is in a sad plight for his own comfort, as well as for his character, who, as to the facts of providential appointment, assumes his competency to render an adverse judgment against his Maker. God, ever since He made the world, has had His own way in its government, and will have to the end of time ; and that, too, whether we like it or not. He did not consult us in making it, and will not in ruling it. He has placed death in our world, with

all its attendant facts ; and we cannot get it out of the world, or change His plan in regard to it.

The best way—indeed the only way consistent with our happiness or with loyalty to God—is to accept the facts in docile and obedient submission to the will of that great Being who knoweth all things, and whose appointments, though irresistible, and to us often severely afflictive, are, nevertheless, made in infinite wisdom and goodness. Why these appointments are what they are, God knows, even if we do not. It will always be safe to assume that He has made no mistake in the plan of this world, and content ourselves with it as we find it. We must do this or jade our thoughts with the perplexities and miseries of unsolved problems.

Whether Christians who have been tenderly allied by earthly friendships, but whose intercourse with each other has been interrupted by death, will meet again on the heavenly shore, there know each other, and there retain any of the specialties of feeling that marked them here, is a question that has often been asked. The consideration of this question is reserved for a subsequent chapter.

Be the answer what it may, one who is sitting under the shadow of a great bereavement, who is thinking with a quickened and intense interest of all the possibilities that relate to his friend dead and gone, and would be glad to

think that he will again meet and know that friend, will do well not to confine his thoughts exclusively to his present sorrows. He should widen his vision, and remember that the facts of this life are properly seen only when seen in relation to God, and also in their relation to another life. God is not managing this world upon the theory that this life embraces the whole of our conscious existence. His plan treats it as merely the dawn of our being; and, hence, whatever happens here, whether of joy or sorrow, is supremely important only by reason of its connection with what is to happen hereafter. There is no supreme and final good in time, either to be gained or lost, and there is no supreme evil to be suffered here. Immortality is the lexicon of time, and the commentary upon its events.

God assures us that all things to them that love Him are working together for their good; and when the whole work shall be done, as in a short time it will be, they will be satisfied with the result and with the method of attaining it. They will then see that they did not shed a tear too many, or feel a pang too sharp. They will then see that they never lost a friend a moment too soon, that death never came except as a messenger of good, and that no saddened hour was without its profit.

Spiritually acquaint thyself with the Man-



Divine, the Great Immanuel, O child of tears, weeping over the sainted friend you have loved and lost! This wisdom, though your grief should search out every crevice of the soul, and leave no spot unpained, will enrich you with that peace of God which passeth all understanding. Try the power of God in Christ, and you will have no occasion to try any other power. Your night will not be so dark as to be without a hymn. Your bleeding heart will somehow forget its pang, and, ere you are aware of it, a song will be on your lips. You will feel the touch of the gentlest, and at the same time the most potent, sympathy that ever ministered to human want. You will, in the sweet serenity of faith and hope, see the happy land whither your loved one has gone; where there is no dying, where no sorrows are felt, and no tears are shed. You will have strength and patience to bear the loss that now afflicts you; and, turning your thoughts to the future, radiant with the glories of Heaven, you will cheerfully anticipate the day when God will make you a partaker of these glories.

Be assured that, if you are the child of God, His grace will make even your deepest sorrow work out for you "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." If you are not His child, hasten at once to seek His friendship, and be at peace with God.

## CHAPTER VII.

### SLEEPING IN JESUS.

SLEEP is the natural and temporary suspension of the mind's intercourse with the external world through the medium of the senses. The fact that it is natural, being recurrent at comparatively brief periods, and needful for the recuperation of exhausted power, distinguishes it from that suspension which is produced by fainting or apoplexy, or by a blow so violent as to obliterate all consciousness for the time being. The fact that it is temporary, and succeeded by wakefulness, distinguishes it from that suspension which is caused by the actual death of the body.

Neither the body nor the soul is dead in mere sleep. The senses will soon resume their usual functions, and then the suspension will end. The soul still remains in the body, and when the senses awake its activity will reappear.

The sleeper, if his sleep be perfect, is in the state of suspended consciousness, without any mental activities which he can remember. If, however, the sleep be not perfect, he may be a

dreamer, recalling the elements of his waking knowledge while in the state of sleep, and passing, it may be, through what seem to be long processes of thought. Simple dreams are nothing but the recurrence during sleep of ideas acquired when we were awake ; and the fact that we have dreams suggests that the soul is not absolutely dependent upon the body, and might be separated therefrom altogether, and yet retain its existence and activity.

Sleep is in some respects analogous to death ; and hence it is used in the Bible in the sense of death. "Lighten mine eyes," says the Psalmist, "lest I sleep the sleep of death." In regard to Lazarus, who had died, and whom Jesus intended to restore to life, the great miracle-worker said : "I go that I may awake him out of sleep." Job says : "For now I shall sleep in the dust, and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be." God said to Moses : "Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers." Daniel predicts the coming time when they "that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake." The martyr Stephen, after praying for his murderers, "fell asleep." The term sleep, as used in these passages, means death. The analogy between sleep and death justifies the application of the same term to both.

We hence speak of the sleep of death, of the sleep of the grave, and of death as the long

sleep. The dead, whether buried or unburied, are asleep, in the sense that their spirits no longer hold intercourse with the living or with the material world through the medium of the bodies they once inhabited. Their spirits are not in those bodies, as they once were, and neither control them nor receive impressions through them. They are asleep to survivors, and cannot be awakened therefrom. We may speak to them, but they will not hear. We may press their cold and lifeless cheeks with the kiss of affection, but they will not feel it. We may visit the spot where their ashes lie, but they will not know that we are there. The summer's heat and the winter's blast are the same to them. The earthquake's shock will not disturb their slumber. No merely natural cause can awaken them. Their eyes and ears are closed in death, to see no more and hear no more. Sensibility has fled from their bodies ; and what happens in this world makes no impression upon them through these bodies. Whole families may, as to their bodies, lie side by side in the same cemetery ; but no recognitions will pass between them. They are all alike sleeping the sleep of death.

Our familiarity with these facts takes away their impressiveness. They come home to the living only when death strikes a cherished friend, and consigns that friend to the long

sleep. Then they startle the soul as if never heard or thought of before. Then the sleep of death has a meaning, and the survivor awakes to its import.

Does the sleep of death, so fatal to all the activities, and even the existence of the body as an organized structure, operate in like manner upon the soul? It is true that the soul does not, after death, give any signs of its continued existence in and through the body that has died. It does not, however, follow from this fact that the soul has died also, or that it has passed into an unconscious and wholly inactive state. We have no evidence from experience, and no proof from any other source, that the death of the body entails this result, even for a moment. The soul, for aught that appears in death as known to us, may simply then leave the body, and go right on with the activities of its intellectual and spirit-life, as perfectly, yea, more perfectly, than when it was confined to and limited by a body of flesh and blood. That this is the fact is the view which the Bible sustains.

Our Saviour, in His argument with the Sadducees, who were the materialists of that age, assumed and affirmed that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, though they had for centuries been dead as to their bodies, were still living and consciously active as to their souls. Moses and

Elias, though they had long been dead, met the Saviour and conversed with Him on the Mount of Transfiguration. Lazarus and the rich man alike die ; and the one is carried by angels into Abraham's bosom, and the other awakes in Hell, being in torment. Both are set before us as still living and conscious after death. To the penitent thief on the cross it was promised that he should be with Jesus in Paradise ; and that, too, on the very day in which both died. The souls of dead men came back to their bodies when Jesus restored life to the latter ; and, at His resurrection, the souls which had inhabited many bodies of dead saints were returned to those bodies, and in the same "went into the holy city and appeared unto many."

Paul desired to depart and to be with Christ. He thought of his home in the body as an absence from the Lord, and was willing to be absent from the body that he might be present with the Lord. He had no idea that death would extinguish his mental life, or for a moment suspend its activity. He expected at death to quit the body, and pass into the personal presence of Christ, in a sense not possible to him while in the body ; and on this subject we can do no better than to imitate his life, and, doing this, then in thought imitate his expectation.

The Scriptures very clearly distinguish be-

tween our body-life and our soul-life, and we are not to confound the two, or regard them as identical, or make the soul either the product of or absolutely dependent upon the body. What we lose in death is our body-life; and what we retain after death is our soul-life. It is the body that sleeps, but not the soul. The former is the present home of the latter, yet not essential to its existence or activity. The conscience, the reason, the affections, the memory, the higher faculties of the soul, are certainly not the creations of a material body. They are spiritual powers; and, according to the doctrine of life and immortality as brought to light in the Bible, they are undestroyed and unharmed by death. The sleep of death is no damage to them.

There is, moreover, a very precious passage in the Bible, in which the pious dead are described as sleeping in Jesus, and from which the title of this chapter is borrowed. "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren," said the apostle to the Thessalonians, "concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also, which *sleep in Jesus*, will God bring with Him."

These words are full of comfort to those who have buried dear friends, and are permitted to

think of them as thus sleeping. Paul meant that they should be words of comfort. Some there are whose sorrows are not mitigated by hope. They have not the knowledge necessary to hope. They do not know what to think of death and the dead. Christians, however, being taught of God, as the apostle assumes, are not thus ignorant. They may have deep sorrow when laying away their pious kindred to sleep in the grave. They may miss their presence and lament their absence ; yet their sorrow is not without hope in respect to these cherished objects of their love. Hope illumines their sky, and makes it radiant with hallowed light. Hope charms away their sorrows, and substitutes the good cheer of its own victories. Blessed hope is that !

God, in His Word, has furnished the premises for this hope. Christians believe and are taught to believe that Christ died and rose from the dead as the first-fruits of them that sleep. They believe, upon the authority of this Word, that God will bring with Him those who, when they died, were believers in Jesus, and, in this sense, sleep in Him. They believe that this risen and ascended Jesus will, at the appointed time, come in the clouds of Heaven, and all the holy angels with Him ; that while those then living will be changed, the dead in Christ will, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, be



raised incorruptible ; that these pious sleepers will rise first ; that the living changed and the risen dead will be caught up together in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air ; that both will ever be with the Lord ; and that then the corruptible will put on incorruption, and the mortal will put on immortality.

These stupendous miracles of the resurrection-day are disclosed in the Bible ; and Christians believe what the Bible says on this subject. It is not more certain that Christ died and rose again, and then ascended into Heaven, than that He will come again, and that these miracles will be wrought. Those that sleep in Jesus will rise from the dead, will meet their Lord in the air, and so will ever be with the Lord.

The resurrection-morn will most wonderfully change the aspect of death and the grave. We need not perplex our minds with curious questions we cannot answer. We need not ask : " How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come ? " It is enough to know that, in the resurrection of the dead, that which was sown in corruption will be raised in incorruption ; that which was sown in dishonor will be raised in glory ; that which was sown in weakness will be raised in power ; that which was sown a natural body will be raised a spiritual body ; that there is a natural body, and

that there is a spiritual body ; and that as the natural body was fitted to earth, so the spiritual body will be fitted to Heaven.

It is enough to know these facts upon the authority of revelation, mysterious and marvelous as they are ; and, knowing them, we are not to sorrow over those who sleep in Jesus, as those do and must who have no such knowledge and no such hope. Inspiration sheds a bright light upon their future, and upon ours, if, like them, we shall also sleep in Jesus. We are to comfort our hearts with these ideas, and say, with the apostle : " Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." We are to believe God, and trust the keeping and safety of the sleepers in Jesus to His gracious and powerful hands. His power is more than a match for death and the grave.

Blessed sleepers ! Take your rest from the toils, the pains and the strife of life. Sleep on till the voice of the archangel shall salute you. You sleep only to us. You are not extinct. That which was immortal in you when living is immortal still. Those glowing affections which grace had kindled still live. Those disembodied spirits which fled to the skies at the touch of death are waiting to be dressed in the garb of a spiritual body, suited alike to the joys and the duties of the heavenly life. What we miss is your presence here. We have not forgotten

you. We remember you as you were in months and years now forever gone, and often try to think of you as you are now. It gives us pleasure to know that your absence from the body and from us means your presence with the Lord. Though we see through a glass darkly, we nevertheless thank God for the information He has given concerning those who sleep in Jesus.

It is our joy to know that those who die in the Lord are blessed, that they rest from their labors, and that their works do follow them. It is our joy to know that to die and be with Christ is better than to live. It is our joy to know that the sleepers in Jesus, in dying, meet no evil fate. ( It is our joy to know that the cloud which hides them from our vision is, on the other side, luminous with their glorified experience. )

Yes! Blessed sleepers! Sleep on and take your rest. We say farewell once more, and bid you good-night, waiting for the morning dawn, to greet you and be greeted by you in that house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens. We hope to meet you there, to know you there, and with you there to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### OUR BODY-LIFE.

THE human body, though comparatively small in the quantity of matter composing it, is, nevertheless, in its attributes, organs, and uses, and in the mysterious principle of life, "fearfully and wonderfully made." The best solution of its existence is that which the Bible gives in the Book of Genesis: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God created He him; male and female, created He them." "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul."

God, according to this record, made the first human body, by the direct *fiat* of His own power, out of matter previously created. This sufficiently explains its existence. We need no hypothesis of natural evolution, going back through a series of lower grades of life to a primitive protoplasm, in order to account for the human body. God's power and wisdom in

the first creation, as the direct and immediate causal antecedent thereof, meet all the demands of the problem.

As a piece of mechanism, the human body conclusively shows design ; and this necessarily implies an intelligent designer, who conceived of the structure before He made it. There is no better argument for the existence of God than that founded on the manifestations of design, and no better example of such manifestations than the body of man.

One of the marvels of this body consists in the mysterious principle of *life*, with which it is invested, and which never leaves it until the occurrence of the event that we call death. No one has ever been able to tell precisely what life is, in distinction from its facts or effects. We observe the facts, and readily note the difference between matter vitalized and matter inanimate ; but the vital principle in the former is too subtle for our observation. The microscope cannot find it. No chemistry can detect it. Be it what it may, God is its author. He put it into the body, and keeps it there during his pleasure. He made the body a *living* body. "In Him we live," as well as in Him "move and have our being." He is the one supreme, constructing and supporting agent of our existence in all its parts. This is the philosophy of the Bible, and equally that of right reason.

The elementary kinds of matter, as well as the primal tissues which compose this wonderful structure, are comparatively few. The matter itself, with the exception of a small quantity of earthy substance that retains the solid form, very soon after death disappears in two or three different gases that float in the air. This matter, during life, is organized into tissues of various kinds, as bones, muscles, nerves, cellular membrane, mucous and serous membrane, ligaments, cartilages, and so on. These tissues are bound together into one composite aggregate, each having its place and function; and the whole is built up from a few kinds of matter, and a comparatively small number of tissues. These particles of matter vitalized, and these tissues organized and arranged, make a human body.

This body, during life, possesses, within certain limits, the power of resisting the agencies of its own decomposition and dissolution, and also the power, within certain limits, of repairing derangements and injuries from which it may suffer, called the "*vis medicatrix naturæ*." The matter composing it is, so far as chemical affinity is concerned, held together very loosely; and, but for the counteracting and preserving power of the vital principle, the body would be decomposed by other and stronger affinities, which speedily do the work,

and thus destroy the body when this principle is gone.

So, also, the body is constantly exposed to derangements of function, usually advertised by the experience of pain at the place of derangement, and also exposed to various injuries, contusions, and wounds from outward causes. These derangements and injuries would soon destroy it, if it were not invested with a self-restoring power, by which it becomes its own physician, and, within certain limits, effects its own cure. The science and practice of medicine are simply a supplement of art to aid this power. The body itself is chiefly its own physician, and, in a vast number of cases, will do the work better without the supplement than with it.

Action, continued for a considerable time, exhausts and enfeebles the body, especially in those parts that are subject to the control of the will ; and hence the necessity for some process of recuperation. This necessity is met by the law of sleep, during which the body sinks into inactivity and repose, and in this way repairs its own exhaustion. Its existence on earth is one of alternate wakefulness and sleep, separated from each other by short intervals.

With the exception of the bodies of our first parents, every human body begins its earthly life in the embryotic condition, which is one of

complete helplessness, and, if continued, would entirely unfit it for its future purposes. The remedy for this condition is the law of natural growth until the body shall have become sufficiently large and strong to meet these purposes. Then the law of limitation steps in, and that of growth comes to an end. Growth within fixed limits, arrested at the proper point, is an appointment of God.

Some parts of the body have assigned to them the function of receiving cognitive impressions from the outward world, and transmitting them to the mind within. This is the office of the five senses of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touch. These senses are on the surface of the body ; and each transmits its own impression, and no one of them ever transmits the impression of any other sense. And, but for this service, the mind incarnated within would have no knowledge of the external world, and could hold no intercourse with other minds in the like condition. The senses let the soul out into the apprehension of its own environments, and open the way for the existence of society on earth, as well as for intelligent action among men. Without them, or some equivalent substitute, the soul would be imprisoned in absolute darkness.

Other parts of the body are constructed for action upon the external world, at the pleasure



and under the direction of the mind within. Here we find the whole system of voluntary muscles attached to bones and joints, and of voluntary nerves centred in the brain and the spinal marrow, which nerves, at the pleasure of the will, have the power of contracting these muscles, and thus producing motion of various kinds.

One form of this motion is locomotion, by which the body is moved from place to place; and for this purpose the lower limbs, alike in bones, joints, muscles, nerves, and feet, constitute a complex and yet effective mechanism. Another form of motion is prehensile, by which objects are seized, moved, and in various ways used, at the pleasure of the will. The arms, with their bones, joints, muscles, nerves—and especially the hands and fingers—perform this service. All that human industry has ever done in modifying the physical condition of the earth, has been done through the arm-apparatus of the body. The arm is the great worker; and, without it, the world would not be what it is to-day. Indeed, without it the race would long since have perished.

This body is also subject, by a process of excretion, to a continual waste of material, which is necessary for its health; and, to supply this waste, other parts have for their special office the work of replenishment and construction.

These parts are not placed under the direct control of the will. The continuance of the body in life depends upon their action ; and hence they are spoken of as vital organs. The lungs, the heart, the blood-vessels, the stomach, the intestines, the liver, and the lacteal system of absorbents, are all engaged in preparing nutrition for the body, or in transmitting it to its proper place. During the period of growth, they outwork the waste of animal matter, and hence the body grows ; and when this period comes to an end they compensate for the waste by excretion. They do not go out in search of food ; this is done by other parts of the body ; but when the food is brought to them, and placed within their sphere of action, then they see to it that it is properly prepared and distributed. There is no culinary skill that can dispense with their service.

Who but God could have contrived such a system for nutrition ? The man who knows anything of his body ought not to doubt the existence of God. Blind, indeed, must he be, if he cannot see a divine hand in the organization and functions of that body.

It is a law of God's appointment that each human body shall die after a short time ; and, unless some expedient is devised to obviate the result, this single fact would speedily destroy the race. God prevents this result by establish-

ing the law of self-propagation, making the sexes numerically about equal, and providing that renewal by births shall as a rule exceed destruction by death, thus arranging not only for the continuance of the race, but also for its gradual increase. The individual dies, but not the race.

The physical environments of the body are adapted to it, and it is adapted to them. The earth, under the hand of industry, supplies, in the most ample abundance and variety, all the food it needs. The atmosphere fans its lungs and decarbonizes and oxygenates its blood. The water furnishes it with a needed solvent and refreshment. The vibrations of air touch its auditory nerve, and convey to the soul within alike the information and the pleasure of sound. The sun pours radiance into its eye. Numerous substances, both mineral and vegetable, upon being properly used, stand ready to aid in the cure of disease. The law of gravitation presses just heavily enough to keep the body in place, and at the same time not interfere with its motion. The bowels of the earth are stored with treasures that can be used, and are used for the convenience and comfort of man.

The varieties of climate ; the division of the globe into land and water in the various forms of such division ; the inequality of the land, giving mountains and valleys, and providing

for rivers to float the commerce of the world ; the atmospheric currents that distribute the rains that water the earth ; the forests that consume what man exhales, and exhales what man consumes ; the succession of the seasons, and the recurrence of day and night ; the immense variety in the special properties of the different forms of matter, as in the hardness of some substances and the softness of others ; the natural laws and forces which can be utilized for man's purposes—all these are so many physical adaptations to the necessities and requirements of the human race.

Any one who knows what man is in his bodily organization, and what this world is in its physical arrangements, will be at no loss to see that the latter was made for the former. God, according to the record given by Moses, made the world first, and then He made man, intending that the former should be a suitable residence for the latter.

This sketch of our body-life, marvellous as the facts are, is but the exordium of a discourse. Were we to stop with it, we should stop short of the most important truth. We must, in order properly to understand the body, fix the eye of thought upon the jewel within which is not the body, and not of the body, and from which the body derives all its value. We must extend our survey to that interior *some-*

*thing* in man which thinks and reasons, which is conscious of its own existence, which hopes and fears, which has moral ideas, which approves or condemns, which is the essential and personal self, which constitutes our continuous identity, which appropriates the pronoun "I," which resides in the body and uses it, and which is there the prince imperial of the earthly structure. We may call it mind, soul, or spirit. It is immaterial what we call it, provided we do not mistake its nature.

This *something* is pre-eminently *the* man in that which makes a man. It is the crown and glory of our nature, the throne of our mental and moral character, and, as an agent, far more wondrously endowed than the body it inhabits. Its presence there explains why the body is at all, and why so much skill was expended in its construction. We do not half see the body until we see the soul that dwells there. The former was made for the latter.

Turn, now, the light of the Bible upon this soul, this spirit, this mental agent, incarnated and localized in the body ; and we instantly see a creature that, unlike the body, is immortal, sent into this world and put into a body, and kept there for a period terminable and terminated, at the pleasure of God, by the providence of death, and then removed therefrom to other scenes whenever this providence becomes

a fact. We see more than this. We see this mental agent existing during the period of incarnation in the character of a *probationer* for another life, with interests depending that stretch through eternal ages, with a shining Heaven to invite and reward virtue, with a burning Hell to alarm guilt and dissuade from sin, and with a judgment-day to settle up the account between God and men, and assign every one to "his own place" in the future world.

We see still more than this. We see the Gospel of redemption by the blood of Christ, full of promise to those who accept it, and loaded with the menaces of wrath against those who reject it. We see arguments on arguments piled, and climax following climax, in the way of persuasion. The terrors of the Lord and the mercies of the Lord are alike spread before us, in language so plain and oft-repeated that the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein. There is no ambiguity in the Bible as to the great errand for which souls are made, and here placed in organized bodies of flesh and blood.

The death of the body marks the point in time when the soul leaves it, and goes elsewhere, and when probation on earth and in the body ends, and retribution and destiny elsewhere begin. Our present body-life, in connection with our soul-life, beyond this point has no further

service to perform. The animal body was never intended to be anything more than a tabernacle for the soul during the period of probation. This period having expired, and the time for the soul's departure having arrived, death comes with its final and fatal blow to the body. The physical organism then ceases in all its functions, and "dust to dust" becomes its fate. The chemistry of life is succeeded by the chemistry of dissolution.

God, through the laws of nature, proceeds to destroy that which He built as the instrument of the soul during the period of its residence therein. His plan does not contemplate the existence of soulless bodies on earth in the living state, and hence He makes the departure of the soul and the death of the body coincident in time. Finely as the body is organized, its continuance in life after the soul has left it and gone elsewhere would be without an end. It never had any end except to furnish a domicile for the soul ; and this purpose it cannot serve when the soul is no longer there. The eye is useless when the seer is gone. The ear is useless when the hearer is gone. The whole body is useless when the spiritual tenant is gone.

We bury the body dead because we must. If it were living, we would cherish it ; if sick, we would do our best to cure it ; but, being dead, and hence useless as to all the purposes

for which it was made, we must either destroy it ourselves, or bury it in the earth, and leave its dissolution to the slow and sure operation of nature's laws. Burial has been the general choice of the race.

Abraham, when his beloved Sarah died in the land of Canaan, mourned and wept for her; and, having paid four hundred shekels of silver for a burial-place, he then buried the wife of his love "in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre." What he did millions have done, and other millions will do. Every city has its Greenwood or Mount Auburn; every village its burying-ground; and almost every family its burial plot, where survivors place the bodies of their kindred dead, and where they themselves expect to take their long sleep.

Thousands upon thousands of acres of land are devoted to this sacred purpose. The monumental marble tells the passer-by whose body was placed here, and whose was placed there, when it was born, and when it died. There the body lies, hidden away from all human eyes, without function or service, yielding to the stern law of its own destruction, while the spirit that once dwelt therein, having heard the judgment announcement that follows death, is either singing in Heaven, or reaping the award of its misdeeds in the world of despair.

Oh, what a spectacle the grave presents,



where bodies decay, and all earthly glories vanish! Oh, what a spectacle eternity presents, where souls, once the tenants of these bodies, reap what they sowed during the period of this tenancy! What a marvellous thing it is to be a man, to live, to die, to live forever, to have a destiny in this *forever* dependent on the life here! Thought staggers under the overwhelming weight of these amazing visions. Language confesses its poverty, and shrinks in dismay from the task of their utterance.



## CHAPTER IX.

### OUR SOUL-LIFE.

MAN, as existing on earth, is a mental or spiritual agent, living and acting in an organized animal body, and in some respects conditioned by, and dependent upon, that body. His soul-life consists in the faculties, susceptibilities, and phenomena which characterize and define him as such an agent. That he so exists and acts is a fact that lies directly under the eye of consciousness, and hence needs no other proof. His mental career in this world begins at birth and terminates at death. The period intermediate between these two points, though comparatively brief, even at the longest, varies with the different ages at which men die.

The soul in the outset appears on the theater of existence, with nothing but its endowments, without education and without experience. What it is thereafter to be depends upon the law of growth ; and the fundamental principle of this law is that its faculties are to be expanded and enlarged by their own activity. We do not create these faculties, or choose the

parentage of which, or the circumstances in which, we shall be born ; but, being created as and what we are, we then, under the law of growth by action, determine what shall be our earthly condition and destiny. God will not do this work for us, or commit it to other hands than our own.

All men, in being the descendants of a common earthly parentage, are, as to their bodies, made of "one blood." So, also, their minds, however divergent in the degree and forms of development, are all patterned after the same model ; and hence they belong to the same mental race, and start in the career of life with essentially the same faculties and susceptibilities in kind. Each man is, in this respect, a specimen of the race.

The soul is the seat, and, indeed, the very essence of human personality, and, being a simple and indivisible unit, is not destructible by any process except that of direct annihilation. No one ever thought of his own personality as divisible, or exchangeable for that of another, or of himself as being a different person at different times. The infant Newton sleeping in his cradle, and the educated and matured Newton roaming among the stars, are not two different persons, but simply one and the same person in different conditions, with a continuous consciousness running through the successive peri-

ods of the same soul-life. No fact is better attested to thought than that of the soul's identity.

The endowments of this individual and self-identifying soul, as shown by their earthly history, present a most marvellous assemblage of powers and susceptibilities, correlated and bound together in one and the same person, and inalienably attached to him.

The percipient power, through the senses, by which we take knowledge of matter ; the conscious power, which advertises to the soul its existing conditions at every moment ; the retentive power, by which the mind recalls and sets in present view the things of the past, and thus keeps a record of itself ; the intuitive power, by which self-evident truths flash through all the chambers of our mental life ; the reasoning power, by which, from truths known, the mind infers truths otherwise not known, and by which, an end being proposed, it adopts means for its attainment ; the power of conscience, by which the soul conceives of moral distinctions, sits in judgment upon the moral quality of actions, approves or condemns, as the actions shall appear to be good or bad, and affirms the obligation of doing the good and avoiding the bad ; the power of abstraction and generalization, by which the materials of knowledge are arranged into classes ; the sensibilities existing in the

form of natural desires for objects, affections relating to conscious beings, and emotions of sundry specific types, in which we find many of our pleasures, and often much of our misery, and which operate as excitants to action ; the principle of self-love, which, when perverted, becomes selfishness, but which is designed to make us properly regardful of our own interests ; the will-power, by which the mind directs the action of the voluntary muscles, and thus moves the body at its pleasure, and by which it determines in the state of freedom what shall be the course of life, and then turns all the machinery of the soul toward the execution of this purpose ; the capacity for happiness and misery, together with the law of divine appointment, that makes our condition as to one or the other largely the result of our own action, and so far leaves the question whether we shall be happy or miserable to our own choice—all these powers and capacities inhere in one and the same mind, and are there adjusted to each other, and to the body in which that mind resides.

We have, in these endowments, the outfit which God saw fit to confer upon us when He “created man in His own image.” They constitute man in his spiritual nature, and ally him with the angelic hosts that make the celestial world ring with the melody of song. They explain why the world was made at all, and why

bodies of such exquisite workmanship were made for their residence. They form the natural glory of the soul, and make it a larger and more significant object of thought than a whole planet of matter unpopulated by souls. Matter exists for mind, and not mind for matter. Insensitive and unconscious existence, in itself considered, has no end. It is only when such existence is brought into some relation to conscious beings, and serves some purpose with reference to them, that an end appears.

Our mental constitution, moreover, supplies all the conditions of a moral government. The soul itself, in the rule of action furnished by conscience, and in the smile of that conscience when we do right, and its frown when we do wrong, is essentially such a government, and proves that the God who made it is a moral governor. It furnishes, in the will, in the capacity to know the right and know the wrong, and in the power to do either, all the necessary conditions of being placed under the authority and sanctions of moral law.

These conditions exist in children at a very early age as the subjects of parental government, and they exist in full-grown men as members of civil society. There is no injustice or oppression in dealing with human beings as properly the subjects of law. Though a wonderful mechanism, demanding divine wisdom

and divine power for the conception and the construction, the soul is not bound by any absolute fate that precludes its moral and responsible agency. No one ever practically thinks of himself or of others as existing or acting under any such fate.

And, still further, this mind or soul, in the progress of its earthly history, makes that great excursion of thought by which the idea of God comes into the field of mental vision. The substance of this idea is no stranger to human thought. Though it may be and often is mingled with many gross perversions, it is, nevertheless, one of the most universal ideas of the race. There is a sense in which religion as a matter of belief, and in some form as a matter of practice, implying the doctrine of God and the resulting doctrine of our relations and duties to Him, is as natural as the breath we draw. He who scorns *all* religion as a mere dream of superstition, sets at defiance the general conviction of all ages and races, and virtually makes the human mind a mere farce, without credibility in one of its most universal affirmations. Such a man is gifted with a self-assumption equalled only by his temerity. There is no danger that the world will ever take him for its apostle.

The doctrine of God, when, by reason of guilt it threatens peril and awakens fear, may be awful, and even repulsive; and yet it has, to

human nature, an irresistible attraction. Men will think it, in spite of themselves. It does not wear out by age, or become obsolete by the lapse of time. Each generation accepts it, and hands it over to its successor. It is thoroughly acclimated in our soul-life, and there finds a natural home. Our mental constitution furnishes for it a fitting dwelling-place; and there it abides through all the changes of our personal or social life.

A strange enigma here meets us in the history of this soul-life; and this we find in the fact that, while the soul recognizes God as a reality, and itself as a reality, it seems to itself to be out of harmony with the God it thus recognizes. The Bible charges what it calls *sin* against the race; and the response of all human consciousness is that the charge is true. No one is surprised upon being told that he is not, in relation to God, what he ought to be. No man lives who is not in this respect his own accuser. One of the most universal confessions of the race is *sin*; and one of the universal inquiries of the race is to find out how man shall settle his accounts with God. Every religion known to earth, whether true or false, has undertaken to answer this question. One of its postulates is that man needs a remedial system to offset the fact of sin and cancel its perils.

Sin, then, is one of the facts of our soul-life



on earth ; and all the necessities created by this fact press upon us. Paul says that " the sting of death is sin ;" and experience proves the truth of the saying. Man needs a remedy for sin as really as he needs food for his body ; and without what he supposes to be a remedy, he can neither live nor die in peace.

Death terminates the career of our soul-life in the present world. The body in which that life was conducted is destroyed ; and all intercourse with the soul through that body comes to an end. Is this event, so fatal to the body, equally so to the soul ? If such were the effect of death, then our present soul-life would be a stupendous failure, not by our fault, but by a mistake we did not commit, and over which we have no control. It would be a brilliant orb kindled simply to illuminate an hour—an august prophecy merely to publish a fable ; a congeries of wonderful endowments out of all proportion to the limitation of their destiny.

Death, upon this supposition, would be a universal homicide, killing both body and soul at the same time—the slaughter of an existence, imperial in its nature, grand in its dimensions, but, alas ! ill-fated in having been at all. The race has always hoped that the soul of man is immortal, and always said that it *ought* to be immortal. The present life, in its view, is simply the preliminary to another, larger and much

longer life into which the soul passes when death smites the body with the final blow. The body dies, but not the soul.

God, in His Word, declares this view to be correct. Life and immortality are, in that Word, brought to light. Death, according to that Word, is not the absolute end of man. Oh, no! The God who made him has made no such mistake. The shriek of annihilation is not for human lips. The dawn of existence is not its doom. The great *hereafter* swings open its gate, and invites the entrance of the pilgrim as he lays down the tasks of this life. He disappears here only to go there. The fundamental idea which underlies the "Pilgrim's Progress," by John Bunyan, is not a delusion. The truth of the idea rests upon the power and veracity of God. Our soul-life is immortal; and what we have here is only the beginning of what we shall have hereafter. Death is not the evening, but rather the morning of this life. Its noonday sun shines on another firmament.

The question, then, arises whether the future life of the soul will be the same to all men, without reference to their conduct and character in time, or, as to good or evil, will be determined by their actions here. Bishop Butler, having remarked that "that which makes the question concerning a future life to be of so great importance to us, is our capacity of hap-

piness and misery," proceeds to say: "And that which makes the consideration of it to be of so great importance to us, is the supposition of our happiness and misery hereafter depending upon our actions here."

This supposition, if supported only by the lowest presumption of its truth, would, for all the practical purposes of action, be as conclusive as the most absolute demonstration. Even the bare possibility that, by taking one course, we could secure eternal blessedness in the life to come, while, by taking another and opposite course, we *might* expose ourselves to eternal wretchedness and woe in that life, would, in the judgment of right reason, be sufficient to determine our choice of the former and our rejection of the latter. No one could prudently defy such a possibility. The fact that confronts us here with its suggestive and impressive analogy, is that our condition in this world, whether of happiness or misery, is largely dependent upon our actions; and, if the same be true in the next world, then we have there what in kind we have here.

The Bible is as clear as the light of day upon this point. It says emphatically: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit

shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." It is not the doctrine of the Bible that conduct here makes no difference with destiny hereafter. Just the opposite is the view which it uniformly either implies or expressly affirms. In the theory of the Bible there is a Heaven for Christian virtue attained and practiced on earth, and there is equally a Hell for unrepentant and unpardoned sinners. God, according to the teaching of this Book, will distinguish between the good and the bad in the judgment-day, and assign them to different destinies in eternity. The supposition which Bishop Butler makes, the Bible presents as a positive certainty resting upon the authority of God.

This certainty is one of amazing import. We do well over to keep it in mind, and let it influence our conduct. It is the one great fact that gives so much significance to our present soul-life, and to everything that we do in that life. Next to God, no being can be so true a friend to the individual man as he himself can be ; and next to God, no being can do him as much harm as he can do to himself. He can, by repentance toward God and faith in Christ, secure for himself a seat in Heaven, and he can for himself secure the damnation of Hell ; and which it shall be depends upon the life he chooses to live here.

The life here, once lived, cannot be repeated

or corrected. There is to be no second edition of its record. The record, as it was when death came and closed up the book, is the record that will go with the soul into eternity, and with which that soul must appear before God. Life on earth is finished at death ; and it is then too late to change one's character, to leave the broad way that endeth in destruction, and take the narrow path that leadeth unto life.

The Bible gives no intimation of any probation after death, in which one may correct the mistakes committed in this life. The probation here established, if misimproved, settles the question of destiny forever. This probation being ended, then he that is righteous will be righteous still, and he that is holy will be holy still ; and so, also, he that is unjust will be unjust still, and he that is filthy will be filthy still. It is not true that a sinner can, at any time or anywhere, in this world or in the next, make his peace with God.

“I now see,” said an eminent judge in his last moments, “what a fool I have been all my life. I have neglected the one thing which I ought supremely to have pursued, and I must meet my God with the sin of this neglect upon me.” Ah, reader, save yourself from this final wail when death shall call you to your last account !

## PART II.

### THE BIBLE HEAVEN.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE HEAVENLY REWARD.

THE endowments of reason, conscience and free will, as ordinarily possessed and exercised by men, make them *moral* beings, competent alike to distinguish between right and wrong, and to do either, and also exempt from any necessity in action destructive of their responsibility. Their relations to God and each other, discoverable by reason without a supernatural revelation, give rise to the law of obligations and duties, summarily stated in the Bible as that of supreme love to God and the love of our neighbor. The faculties which men possess, taken in connection with the relations in which they exist and exercise the same, render it certain that they will, and necessarily must, form a moral character of some kind, either positive or negative, good or bad. What this character

shall be, and not whether it shall be at all, is the only question submitted to their choice.

The fundamental law of human thought, as to the *results* of moral action, is that good consequences to the actor in the sense of happiness *ought* to follow from right acts, as the reward thereof, and that evil consequences to the actor in the sense of misery *ought* ultimately to follow from wrong acts, as the just and proper punishment therefor. The reverse of this would to us appear as an inversion of moral order. A system constructed on the principle of making it, on the whole, ill with the righteous, and well with the wicked, cannot be conceived of as real, without a violation of what we, by the very constitution of our being, are compelled to regard as just and proper. We feel no such difficulty when virtue is rewarded, and vice is punished. Our natural sense instantly says that this is what *ought* to be. This sense gives a strong support to civil government in its action against crime.

The matter of fact, under the constitution and course of nature, as shown by observation and experience, is that our enjoyments and miseries are, to a large extent, the consequence of our actions; that the former are annexed to some actions, and the latter to others; that these actions are in our power to do or forbear; and hence that our happiness and misery in this life

are, to the same extent, placed in our own power. This order is no accident with God, and no accident on earth. It is the divine pleasure that we should receive the appointed consequences of what we do, and in this sense reap what we sow. The natural providence of God is largely an expression of this pleasure ; and in this way a rule of conduct is supplied, as plainly as if written in letters of light on the sky.

Moreover, the reward of some actions, considered as right, and because they are right, and the punishment of others, considered as wrong, and because they are wrong, form a part of the scheme of God's natural providence in this world. We observe this fact in the comforts or discomforts that result from the individual conscience ; and, when we turn to society, whether in its purely legal action, or in its spontaneous movements, we there see that, as a general rule, the social advantages, success, and blessings of life are on the side of virtue rather than that of vice. The whole of this life being taken into the account, it is good policy on the score of happiness to do right rather than to do wrong. Virtue pays better than vice.

Discreet parents are constantly teaching this lesson to their children ; and writers upon ethics have in every age urged it upon the attention of their readers. There is no doubt of its truth,



and so far as this fact exists in the present world, the government of God over it is, in *kind*, a moral government, in the sense that God makes a distinction between the good and the bad, and apportions condition and destiny to men somewhat on the basis of their moral character.

The present life is certainly not the *perfection* of such a government, since it is not true that every one's condition, whether of happiness or misery, is exactly according to his moral character, and solely the fruit thereof. And yet, in its well-known facts, this life clearly furnishes a moral government in *kind*, and, although a mixed system as to the causes which determine human condition on earth, more than suggests that what we observe here in kind, and to some extent, is but the beginning of what will be fully realized hereafter. We here see in virtue the underlying principle of reward, and in vice the underlying principle of punishment. Our experience furnishes both ideas, and also leads to the adoption and use of words for their expression. We know enough of moral order to know what the term "reward" means, and also what the term "punishment" means. These terms and their verbal equivalents are intelligible to humanity.

The Bible, being no stranger to these facts of our earthly life, assumes, without any dis-

cussion of the point, that man is a moral and responsible agent ; that he exists in moral relations to God and to his fellow-man ; that he has a moral character as the result of what he does or omits in these relations ; that the blessings which attend the life of virtue and holiness are an expression of God's good pleasure toward the virtuous and the holy ; and that the miseries of sin are equally an expression of His disfavor toward the wicked. It connects God directly with the government of this world, and with these facts in its history ; and whether the facts occur under natural laws, or as the result of supernatural interposition, makes no difference in the view which the Bible takes of their relation to God, or His relation to them. He works in both ways, and in neither is He indifferent to the moral character of His creatures. He is on the side of virtue and holiness, and rewards the same, and opposed to sin, and punishes sinners.

Such, beyond all question, is the God who appears in the Bible. No one can read that Book with the least degree of thoughtfulness, without being at once confronted with the existence and government of such a God, and without seeing that he is in the hands and under the power of this God, and cannot by any possibility extricate himself therefrom. He cannot fail to see that God Himself is infinitely holy, op-

posed to sin and in favor of virtue, and that He means to make it well with the righteous and ill with the wicked, and that we must be on good terms with Him, or be exposed to His wrath. This thought will blaze from all directions upon any one who carefully studies the Bible. He cannot read it out of the Book and yet read the Book correctly.

The immortality which the Bible brings to light, is not simply an endless duration of conscious existence, but rather an endless state of rewards and punishments, considered with reference to the deeds done in the body, and hence the divinely appointed result of what we do in this world. There is in that Book a day of judgment, a Heaven for those whom God approves, and a Hell for those whom He disapproves and condemns. It is under these forms of thought, and in connection with the doctrine of future and eternal retribution, both remunerative and punitive, that the Bible brings life and immortality to light.

Whatever Heaven is as a place, or a state, or both, it is, according to the Bible, the *reward* of the righteous in view of their moral record, and is never separated from that record. Their character here has something to do with their Heaven hereafter. And so, whatever Hell is as a condition, it is, according to the same Bible, the *punishment* of the wicked for their conduct

in time. Neither is dissevered from human character. What the being is morally, as he was on earth, is the one question that, by its answer, determines in what world he will dwell hereafter. Two or three passages from the Word of God will be sufficient to illustrate and enforce these statements.

Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, having referred to the Jews as treasuring up for themselves "wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God," proceeds to speak thus of God: "Who will render to every man according to his deeds; to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil; of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honor, and peace to every man that worketh good; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; for there is no respect of persons with God." We have here the general statement that, in the future life, God will render to every man according to his deeds; and then we have the application of this principle to the two classes of persons described, and distinguished from each other by their respective characters. One of these classes will be reward-

ed, and the other punished. The verbal picture is lucid, and the language intense and strong.

We find, in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, the following words from the pen of the same apostle: "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." It is a doctrine of the Bible that God "will judge the world in righteousness" by Jesus Christ; and hence we are all to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. The declared purpose is "that every one may receive the things done in his body;" and this clearly means that he may be rewarded or punished for his course and conduct on earth. It was while here, in a body of flesh and blood, that he acted, and for what he then did he is to receive the appropriate award. The rule of what he is to receive will be "according to that he hath done;" and this idea is both emphasized and explained by the addition of the words, "whether it be good or bad." The application of this rule will not and cannot assign the same destiny to persons of opposite moral characters. Differing in character, they must also differ in destiny.

"Be not deceived," says the same apostle in his Epistle to the Galatians; "God is not

mocked : for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption ; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." We have here the general principle of reaping what we sow, with a specification of the two kinds of sowing and the two kinds of reaping, and are also warned not to be deceived on this subject. God will not be mocked or frustrated in the administration of His government. He will distinguish between those who sow to the flesh and those who sow to the Spirit. We must at last reap what we sow. We cannot sow to the flesh, and yet reap "life everlasting."

These passages, like many others found in the Word of God, present the future life to our thoughts, as a state of rewards and punishments based on the deeds done in the body. We have, to some extent, the fact of rewards and punishments in this life, so that, on the whole, it is here better with the righteous than with the wicked. The Bible teaches us that this principle will hereafter act with a fulness, perfection, and exactness, as to condition and destiny, which are not found here ; and thus all the seeming irregularities and inequalities of this life will be rectified, and every one will at last receive "according to that he hath done." The only thing that we carry with us when leaving

this world is our moral character ; and this we must carry with us. For this character, if good, we shall be rewarded in Heaven, and for it, if bad, punished in Hell.

Such is the Bible doctrine as to the relation between the life that now is and that which is to come. The heavenly life, under this doctrine, is set before us as the divine reward of a life on earth that pleases God. He thus testifies in Heaven His good pleasure toward those who on earth pleased Him. The life they here lived secured His favor, as the opposite life does not ; and in making us the friends of God, it makes Him our friend. He pledges His friendship beforehand, and will keep the pledge when we meet Him in the world of spirits.

How then, it may be asked, can any man ever be rewarded in Heaven, if, as the Bible declares, all men have sinned and come short of the glory of God, and if by the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified in the divine sight ? How can Saul, of Tarsus, the persecutor, and, as he says of himself, the chief of sinners, be admitted into Heaven at all, or share in its reward ?

There is no answer to this question in respect to Saul or any other sinner, either in the Bible or out of it, except that furnished by the Gospel of Jesus Christ ; and this is a complete answer. It is this Gospel that is declared to be

“the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” We learn from this Gospel, and not elsewhere, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; that He hath redeemed His people from the curse of the law, being made a curse for them; that being justified by faith we have peace with God through Him; and that there is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, and who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. It is the Gospel, and this only, that says: “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and unto our God, for He will abundantly pardon.” It is the Gospel that says: “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” God in the Gospel of His Son, spoken of by an apostle as “the glorious Gospel of the blessed God,” reveals Himself to our world as he does not in the law. Grace to sinners and salvation for them are characteristics of this Gospel.

Repentant and believing sinners, renewed in the spirit and temper of their minds, pardoned and justified through Christ, and by adoption made the children of God, and, consequently, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, are, in the future life, to be treated as if they had al-



ways been as pure as the unfallen angels. They are, in the rhetoric of the Bible, referred to as saints, as righteous, just and holy ; and to them, and in view of their spiritual condition, God in the Gospel promises the heavenly reward, not on the basis of their sinless perfection in this life, but on the theory of their recovery from sin, and on the basis of grace extended to them through Christ. The Gospel is a divinely appointed adjustment to meet the exigency created by human sinfulness, and open the door of hope to those whom the law condemns.

Paul, once a persecutor, but afterward a follower and preacher of Christ, is an example of a saint and a righteous man in the Bible sense. His record as a saint pleased God, and, through the plan of grace, gained for him the divine approval and favor. Centuries ago he finished his course in this world, and went up on high, and was admitted into Heaven as if he had never sinned. He was saved in Heaven by grace through Christ, and not as a matter of personal merit ; and yet this salvation was not less an expression of God's approval of his character as an apostle, and not less a reward of his fidelity as the servant of Christ. The will of God, as expressed in the Gospel, is that we should believe on Him whom He hath sent ; and compliance with this will as certainly secures the heavenly reward as it would have been

secured by a life of sinless obedience. What Paul calls "the obedience of the faith," under the Gospel, and as to our future destiny, takes the place and does the work of perfect obedience under the law.

The fact that sin which, "when it is finished, bringeth forth death," does not, by an irreversible necessity, preclude all mercy to the sinner, and exclude all hope for him, is, by the work of Christ, in the case of man, and for his relief, made a fact in the moral government of God. No such fact existed in the case of those angels that "kept not their first estate." God, as we learn from Peter and Jude, did not spare them, "but cast them down to Hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." Providing no Gospel of salvation for them, He dealt with them under law, and according to law, and that only. Their sinfulness was, consequently, fatal.

This, as the Bible tells us, was not and is not the rule of God in respect to man. Had it been, not a ray or hope would have ever visited our world. Sin no sooner entered the domain of human history than a promise of relief entered the same domain. That promise, through the patriarchal, the Mosaic and the prophetic ages, continued to ascend higher and higher, and with clearer light, on the sky of revelation, until "the fulness of the time was come;" and then

we find Jesus Christ on the earth in human flesh, coming down from Heaven, heralded by angels, preaching a Gospel of salvation to and for sinners, making an atonement for them by His own suffering and death, and by that atonement rendering it possible that God should justify and save the guilty who believe in Him, and turn back to God through Him, without any sacrifice of those ends that are guarded by His law.

God Himself has thus solved the problem of man's salvation, and, in solving it, He has shown us how the heavenly reward can be bestowed on a penitent and believing sinner. We can do no better with the solution than to accept it, just as it is stated to us in the Word of God, without any effort to modify or improve it. If "it became Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings," then it becomes us to bow our heads and our hearts in complete docility of faith to the wisdom and the will of God on this subject. That which it becomes God to do, is by this one fact placed infinitely beyond the adverse criticism of man.

The reason, in the mind of God, for this extraordinary interposition in human behalf, is thus stated in the Bible: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son,

that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." Why this reason operated in the case of man, and not in that of fallen angels, the Bible does not state. It did operate for our relief, and that suffices for our wants. The love of God in Christ, working through Christ, makes the heavenly reward possible to sinners of the human race, and real to the believer.

The Christian in Heaven, rescued from sin in both its curse and its power, fitted in his spiritual state for the enjoyments and services of that world and there graciously rewarded with an heirship of God and a joint-heirship with Christ, will surely not lack a theme to evoke his gratitude and inspire his song. He will see a grace in the Gospel, a grace in the love expressed by it, a grace in its saving application to his own soul, a grace in the means used to apply it, a grace in what was on earth an affliction, a grace in the maintenance of his own faith to the end of life, a grace in the sufferings and death of Christ, a grace in the work of the Holy Spirit, a grace in sins pardoned and a soul justified, a grace in the whole scheme of providence toward him from the cradle to the grave—all of which combined to make him meet to be a partaker of "the inheritance of the saints in

light." The virtues that illumined his life on earth, being perfected in Heaven, will pour into his soul a stream of eternal blessedness. Heaven, with all its joy and glory, will be the sequel, the product, and the gracious reward of what he was here.

The earthly and the heavenly are, under the Gospel, thus linked together. The saint on earth precedes the saint in Heaven. The man whom the Gospel calls a saint no sooner steps out of this world than he is greeted with the salutations of the celestial world. He shuts his eyes on earth, and opens them in Heaven.

Broad is the contrast between this saint and the man who lives and dies under the double guilt of having disobeyed the law of God and rejected the Gospel of His grace. The final doom of that man is in these words: "He that believeth not shall be damned." There is no gracious reward for him in Heaven. No promise from the skies salutes his ear. He goes to the bar of God only to be confronted with the punitive retribution appointed for unrepentant, unbelieving, and unpardoned sinners. He will find out at last that the moral government of God is a stupendous and affecting reality, and that sin "when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

Unpardoned guilt, under the law of God, means hereafter "indignation and wrath, tribu-

lation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil ;” and this is the Bible Hell. Pardoned guilt, under the Gospel of Christ, means hereafter “glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good ;” and this is the Bible Heaven. The two are different as conditions, and different in the antecedents to which they relate, and which have procured them.

Which of these conditions shall be ours, when we shall have completed the work of this life, and entered upon the scenes of the next, is a matter that God submits to our choice, while we are here, without any coercion that necessarily determines that choice. Motives are addressed to us as reasons for action ; yet all these motives leave us free to choose the way of life or the way of death. The result of the choice, when made, God Himself fixes. We cannot choose the earthly life of the unrepentant and unbelieving sinner, and at the same time gain the heavenly life of the repentant and believing sinner.

We do well not to forget that the supposition of a probation after death, in which we may secure the heavenly reward, if we have failed to do so in this life—stated as a possibility by some, and affirmed as a positive faith by others—has no warrant in the Bible. That Book, alike in what it says and what it does not say, proceeds upon a very different theory.

It treats the present life as if it were the only period in which any one can lay up for himself "treasures in Heaven." Its oft-repeated exhortation to immediate action, its constant warnings against delay, and its frequent reminders that our stay on earth is limited and to us uncertain, and, hence, that what we do in preparing for eternity we must do quickly—all this plainly assumes that, with reference to our future state, "life is the time to serve the Lord," and the only time in which to secure "the great reward." The Bible preaches the doctrine of repentance toward God, and of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the conditions of salvation, with an urgency and an earnestness clearly implying that such is the fact. This life, upon the very face of its teaching, appears to supply the moral conditions upon which our future and eternal destiny is dependent.

Paul, in a passage already quoted, assures us that "we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that *every one may receive the things done in his body*, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." This limits the adjudication of the final judgment to the things done in the body, and does not extend it to things done out of the body, and after death. The same apostle, urging, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, direct and immediate attention to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and having his

eye fixed on the present neglect of that Gospel, says : " How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation ?" This is equivalent to saying that there is no escape from the penal consequences of such neglect, and, consequently, no future probation in which the mistake can be corrected. Christ, in His final commission to His apostles, directed them to go " into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature ;" and then, with direct reference to that Gospel as preached in this life, and as here accepted or rejected, he added : " He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Here certainly is no idea of probation after death, for those to whom the Gospel has been preached, and by whom it has been rejected. The exact reverse is the plain implication of the Saviour's words.

We need not speculate as to what God will do with infants who, by reason of immaturity, are not competent either to accept or reject the Gospel ; or as to what He will do with the heathen who never had any knowledge of this Gospel ; or as to whether the power of the Gospel to save sinners is absolutely limited to those who have specific knowledge of the mission and work of Christ. It is enough, for all practical purposes, to know what God will do with *us*, if, having this knowledge, we here re-



ject the Gospel of His Son, and pass into eternity in this state. Will He extend our probation into that eternity, and thus give us another opportunity to secure the heavenly reward, or will He close it at death, and thus exclude all such opportunities forever? The latter is, and the former is not, the view that lies upon the face of the Bible.

He who in this world sins against the law, and sins against the Gospel, and then dies as he lives, hoping that somehow by a second probation he will escape the damnation of Hell, and be at last admitted into the joys of Heaven, clearly does not take the course that God commands, and as clearly has no Scripture warrant for his hope. He follows neither the preaching nor the example of the apostles. He does not act in accordance with a reasonable prudence. He suspends the eternal weal of his soul upon an hypothesis which he cannot prove. He omits to improve an opportunity, which is present and real, in the vague expectation that he will have a like opportunity after death, and in another world.

The Christian is much the wiser and better man. Believing on Christ now, loving and serving God now, and thus preparing for Heaven now, he has no occasion for a second probation in which to do what he does in the probation present. He makes good use of what he now

has, and, so doing, reads his title clear to mansions in the skies. There is no doubt that the Bible promises Heaven to him, whether the theory of a second probation be true or false. His salvation does not turn upon the truth of this theory, but is entirely assured without it.

The reader will observe that this chapter treats simply of the *manner* of getting to Heaven, and disposes of this question by the revealed relation between our moral conduct in this life and our destiny in that which is to come. The remaining chapters of this Part are devoted to an exhibit of *what* Heaven is, as disclosed to us in the Bible.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE HEAVENLY PLACE.

MAN, during the period in which his body exists as a vitalized structure, is an inhabitant of the earth. It is fitted to be to him a place of residence, and he is equally fitted to occupy it. Individuals die, but not the race; and, hence, to the race, the earth is the place of continuous abode through a succession of generations.

Astronomically considered, the earth is one of a number of planets, and, like them, revolves around the sun in a regular orbit, and upon its own axis, and derives light and heat from the great orb of day. The sun and these planets, taken together, form what is called the "Solar System."

Some of the planets are known to be so similar to the earth, in the adaptations of the latter to the residence of man, as analogically to suggest that they are also inhabited worlds, and that the beings who inhabit them are, in some respects, like those who dwell upon the earth. This widens the sphere of intelligent and con-

scious life beyond that of this world, and gives rise to the doctrine of a "Plurality of Worlds," having its basis in certain coincidences between the earth and other globes of matter.

Extending our observation to the fixed stars, we see numerous orbs of light which, by reason of their great distance from the earth, appear on our nocturnal sky simply as luminous points. Reasoning analogically in regard to them, we suppose them to be suns, and, like our own sun, centres and sources of light and heat, having opaque bodies that revolve around them and borrow light and heat from them, which bodies are also inhabited by intelligent beings, but are so distant from the earth that they are to us wholly invisible. This still further widens the sphere of conscious life, and gives us the conception of a "Plurality of Worlds" on a much grander scale than that of the "Solar System."

We know that the earth, during the period of man's bodily life, furnishes to him a place of residence, alike in respect to his body and his soul; and, starting from this known fact as the point of mental departure, we presume, with some degree of probability at least, that a somewhat similar fact exists beyond the earth, and beyond the "Solar System," and that it extends to the system of fixed stars.

Moreover, matter, as we observe it, does not exist in the form of mere particles, miscellane-

ously and indefinitely diffused through space, without order or arrangement. It exists as globes or vast bodies of matter, subject to established laws, and with immense interspaces between them. These bodies are in the state of motion ; and this motion is so regulated that they do not collide, or interfere with each other. The earth is one of these bodies ; and, considered relatively to all the others, it has a fixed position from which it never wanders, and they also, considered relatively to the earth, have a fixed position from which they never wander. Order and harmony thus rule over the motion of these vast masses of matter.

We know that, in respect to the earth and to man as the inhabitant thereof, this order and harmony serve important purposes. The unceasing revolution of the earth upon its own axis and its annual circuit around the sun fit it to be the residence of man, as it would not be but for these facts. The facts are a part of the wonderful adjustments of the earth to such a residence. Observing similar facts, to some extent, in the motions of other worlds, we conclude, not without reason, that they were intended by the great Architect of nature to serve a like purpose. In a word, matter seems to be made and organized for the residence of conscious and intelligent beings.

The Book of Genesis informs us that, "in

the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," meaning, by the phrase "the heaven," all worlds or globes of matter, except the earth. The rational supposition is, not that all the bodies of matter, included in this phrase, were made simply for the earth or for the sake of man, but that they are the habitations of intelligent beings, or, like our sun, furnish light and heat to bodies that are such habitations, and that these beings are so constructed that light and heat can minister to their wants, which would imply that this construction has at least some resemblance to that of man. We cannot demonstrate the truth of this view; and yet, from what we know of this world, and of ourselves as resident therein, it commends itself to our minds as reasonable. We feel no difficulty in accepting it, as having some degree of probability. Our knowledge goes far enough impressively to suggest it.

He who confines intelligent and moral life to the human race, while ignoring what the Bible says about angels, who, in that Book, are set before us as beings of a higher order than men, also limits mental and moral life to a very small sphere, when compared with the numerous and stupendous magnitudes of matter that reveal themselves in our earthly heavens. A much more reasonable supposition is that which makes such life commensurate with these magnitudes.

Unconscious matter, unpopulated by intelligent beings, and, hence, serving no purpose with reference to such beings, would exist for no end that we can discern. It might fill vast fields in space, and occupy still vaster fields in its motions ; but if it held no relations to mind, either as a habitation or for any other purpose, there would be no perceptible final cause to furnish a reason for its existence at all.

Matter, to human thought, certainly has its reason in its convenience and utility to conscious intelligence ; and unless we adopt the wholly improbable idea that all the vast worlds of matter were made simply for the human race, we must conclude that this race is but a very small fraction of universal intelligence, and that the great God who made this world and made all worlds is known in other worlds as well as here, and perhaps in some of them far better known than here. This idea befits the God revealed in the Bible, and revealed in His works, so far as these works come under our observation.

What, then, as we turn to the Bible, shall we think and say in regard to the Heaven of which that Book speaks as the dwelling-place of the righteous after they leave this world by death ? Is this Heaven an inhabited world, a residential *place*, a place of *abode*, distinct from all other places, or is it simply a *spiritual* state, without

reference to any question of locality? Looking at this question on the basis of mere reason, we plainly can give no answer to it, either affirmative or negative, other than the presumption of a very limited analogy, suggesting that, if the righteous exist after death, they will so exist in some special dwelling-place, which is fitted to them, and to which they are fitted.

If we find this to be the idea which the Bible gives us of Heaven, then it is simply, in kind, what we know to be true on earth, and analogically presume to be true of other worlds. It will certainly be safe to receive the impression which the Bible naturally conveys to our minds, and to think and speak of Heaven as that Book does, especially as we know nothing on the subject, except as instructed from this source. Inspired words, taken in their natural and obvious sense, are safe words to use, and much better guides to thought than any merely human speculations that have no data to support them. What, then, in regard to Heaven, is the natural and obvious sense of these words?

The first answer to this question is supplied by the Bible record in respect to Christ. That record makes Heaven a residential place as really as it makes earth such a place; and if we were wholly dependent upon this record for our knowledge of both, we should conclude that the one is as much such a place as the other.



The substance of what the Bible says is that Christ, in His higher nature, existed prior to His coming into this world ; that He so existed in Heaven ; that He came *from* Heaven to earth ; that He dwelt on earth for some thirty-three years, and here did and said the things reported in the Gospel narrative ; that He died upon the cross, and there said to the penitent thief, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise ;" that He arose from the dead on the third day ; that, after showing Himself to His disciples by many "infallible proofs," and after instructing them concerning the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, He returned in His "glorious body," and by a miraculous ascension, to and into the Heaven from which He came, and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high ; that thereafter this Heaven was the place of His personal presence and abode, as the glorified High Priest, Advocate, and Intercessor for all His people ; that from this Heaven He will, at the end of time, personally come again to our world, raise the dead, and sit in judgment upon the race ; and that the pious and risen dead, and the saints then living, will meet their Lord, and thereafter dwell with Him in Heaven.

These propositions, each of which might be established by an ample array of proof texts, contain a summary of wonderful facts in respect to the Bible Christ. Heaven, by the resi-

dence of Christ therein, is, on the face of these facts, characterized as a place of abode. He descended from Heaven when He came to earth ; and then, when He left the earth, He ascended into Heaven. He once dwelt on earth in a body, and He now dwells in Heaven in a body. Heaven in the record, relating to Christ, as much appears to be a residential place as does the earth appear to be such a place. He told His disciples, just prior to His death, that He was about to leave them, but that He would prepare a place for them, that He would come again and receive them unto Himself, and that *where* He was *there* they also should be. In His intercessory prayer He said : " Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be *with* Me, *where* I am." This phrase " where I am " marks a heavenly locality, and not simply a spiritual state.

Paul evidently had this idea when he expressed the " desire to depart and to be with Christ," and also when he regarded his presence in the body as an absence from the Lord, and was " willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." He thought of Christ as being in Heaven, and desired himself to go there, and there be with Christ, in a sense not possible while he remained in the flesh. That Heaven is distinctively a residential place, and one and the same place, is

a fact that shines all through the record given of Christ ; and we cannot think and speak as the Bible does without conveying this idea.

The apostle, in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, sets forth a very remarkable experience, of which he himself was the subject. He says : " I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, whether in the body I cannot tell, or whether out of the body I cannot tell : God knoweth ; such a one caught up to the third Heaven. And I knew such a man, whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell : God knoweth ; how that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."

This man, whom Paul thus knew, is Paul himself ; and what he knew of himself is that he was caught up to " the third Heaven," or " into Paradise," and there " heard unspeakable words." Whether he was, at the time, in the body, or out of it, he could not tell.

Paul was familiar with the fact that the Bible speaks of three heavens ; first, the aërial or atmospheric heavens, in which the clouds appear, and from which the rain descends ; secondly, the starry heavens, in which the sun, moon and stars seem to be situated ; and, finally, " the third Heaven," in which God specially dwells, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God, where the holy angels reside, and where " the

spirits of just men made perfect" were assembled. It was to this "third Heaven," or into this "Paradise" of God, that he was "caught up," or suddenly removed, in a manner which he did not understand. He knew the fact, and this fact he states.

It is very plain that this "third Heaven," this "Paradise," appeared to Paul as a *place* in which he was, where others were, and where he "heard unspeakable words." He speaks of it as a place, and of himself as being caught up to that place, with the knowledge of the ideas attached to the language he uses, intending that the Corinthians should receive the impression that this language naturally conveys. And, if Paul thought of "the third Heaven" as a residential place, we shall make no mistake in doing the same thing.

This idea harmonizes with, and is suggested by, what the Bible teaches us in regard to the translation of Enoch and Elijah, both of whom were taken to Heaven, body and soul, without death. It also harmonizes with the teaching of the Bible in regard to the bodies which the righteous will have after the resurrection. These bodies, though different from the body of flesh and blood that dies, will, nevertheless, be material bodies, and, as such, will have a dwelling-place; and the spirits resident therein will also have a dwelling-place; and this place is

obviously "the third Heaven" of which Paul speaks.

The words that indicate motion *to* and *from* this place, and residence *in* it, are constantly used in the Word of God, and that, too, with reference to God Himself, to Christ, to the holy angels, and also the redeemed who go from this world to Heaven. The rhetoric of the Bible is, in various forms, based upon and adjusted to the idea that Heaven is a residential locality in distinction from all other localities. It could not be more so if we assume the idea to be true. Inspired men evidently thought it to be true. Christ Himself spake as if it were true. We can do no better than to accept the idea, upon the authority of the Book that in so many ways suggests and implies its truth.

Accepting this view, and regarding redeemed sinners as having their residence in Heaven after death, we, then, have at least one class of beings who begin their career in one world, and there have a history, and are then transferred to another and different world, as their permanent and final abode. Having lived here during the allotted period, they go away from earth to live in Heaven. It takes two lives—the one on earth and the one in Heaven—to make up their entire history. Their existence is not wholly here nor wholly there, but first here, and finally there. They are essentially the

same beings in both worlds, but in very different conditions. The heavenly condition, as to knowledge, purity of character, and happiness, is immensely in advance of that of earth, and follows as the sequel of what was true here.

The departure of the Christian from the body, and from this world, by dying, though in some respects seeming to be an appalling catastrophe, and to surviving kindred always a sore affliction, is really no catastrophe at all, but simply the translation of a redeemed soul from earth to Heaven—the leaving of one world and going to another and better world—the taking down of the earthly house of our tabernacle and going to the building of God, the house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens. This, so far from being a catastrophe, is really a sublime change. We must not look simply into the grave where the body moulders, and goes back to dust, if we would properly understand the Christian's death. We must look into Heaven, where the soul lives, and is holy and happy forever.

It was the divine purpose, in the creation "of all things by Jesus Christ," as we learn from Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians, that "the manifold wisdom of God" should, "by the Church," be made known "unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places." These "principalities and powers" are the holy

angels, resident in "heavenly places," and not on the earth. They are often referred to in the Bible as dwelling in Heaven, and as surrounding the throne of God in Heaven. Whether these angels, like men, began their existence elsewhere, and there had a period of probation, and were then transferred to Heaven, as Christians are at death, we do not know. Be this as it may, they appear in the Bible as inhabitants of Heaven, and co-residents with redeemed sinners in that world. To them in the "heavenly places" the plan of man's redemption is known, and to them the redeemed Church of God is known, and in this Church and by it, as redeemed by Christ, they behold "the manifold" or greatly diversified "wisdom of God."

Peter, in his First Epistle, tells us that the angels in Heaven "desire to look into" the "things" that constitute the plan of human redemption. Although it was not provided for them, they are, nevertheless, greatly interested in it; and to them it is a matter of joy that it was provided for man, and that, through this plan, millions upon millions of the human race have found their way to the Heaven in which they dwell. The Saviour says that there is joy among these angels when even one sinner repenteth. Sinners for whose transgression Christ made the all-sufficient atonement, being converted and justified, being kept by the power

of God through faith unto salvation, and at last translated to Heaven, present to their vision a spectacle in which they discover "the manifold wisdom of God." The facts of Christ's work on earth, and the facts of His work in Heaven—both radiant with this wisdom—are the means of making to them a special revelation of God. They thereby see God in Christ, and God in a redeemed Church, associated with them in the "heavenly places."

God, in the Gospel of His Son,  
Makes His eternal counsels known,  
Where love in all its glory shines,  
And truth is drawn in fairest lines.

Where, then, shall we look for this glorious Heaven where Christ dwells, of which the Bible says so much, which it promises to the spiritual "children of God," and with which it enlightens and inspires our faith and hope, as we pass through this vale of tears? Where, considered relatively to other worlds, shall we locate the Bible Heaven? In what constellation is it to be found? Does it lie within, or is it beyond, the constellations that appear on our sky? Has the telescope found it? What is the distance from earth to Heaven? Is Heaven the great central world around which all other worlds revolve? In a word, where, in the vastness of illimitable space, shall we place the heavenly world, made known to us in the Bible, and in



that Book declared to be the habitation of God's redeemed children after death ?

These questions have not infrequently occurred to human thought, especially to speculative human thought. It is well to know what to do with them. Dismissal at sight is the proper disposal of them. The questions themselves lie beyond the range of our knowledge. The Bible does not answer them, and there is no astronomy of earth that can do so. It is always a waste of time and thought to trouble one's self with questions to which no answer can be given, except that of sheer speculation without any proof.

It is enough for the Christian to know that the Bible Heaven is not a fable, a mere myth of fancy, but a glorious *place*, a residential reality and locality *somewhere* in the universe of God, and that when he dies he will go there, and there reside forever. It is enough for him to know that Christ, the great "Captain" of our salvation, is there, and that He went there when He left our world by miraculous ascension, and that He there officiates as the "High Priest of our profession," and that it is His will that His people should be there with Him. The Bible gives us this knowledge, and, for the present, we must content ourselves with it. We cannot get beyond it while we remain in the body and had better not make the attempt.

Our space-penetrating powers are not equal to the task of finding the locality of the heavenly world, and we do not need the knowledge for any practical purpose.

What *kind* of a place is Heaven? How large is it? How is it constructed, and of what is it constructed? Is it made of a kind of matter different from any with which we are acquainted? What are its arrangements, and how is it adapted to its inhabitants? These and all similar questions we must dismiss with no attempt to answer them. We cannot answer them if we try. We know that, whatever Heaven may be as a place, it is the most desirable and happy place in the universe. The Bible tells us who are its inhabitants, and what is their character; but it does not tell us precisely what Heaven is, simply as a place, with the exception of the general idea that it is the abode of these inhabitants, and, as such, adapted to holiness and happiness forever. Earth is adapted to our present residence, and Heaven is and will be adapted to the future and eternal residence of all who go there from this world. He who wants more information than this will not find it in the Bible; and he certainly will not, in any speculations on the subject.

There is another question that may suggest itself: What is the process of the soul's transit

at death, from earth to Heaven? The proper answer is that we do not know just how this transit is made. We know upon the authority of the Bible that it is made; but the exact method does not come within our observation. The mere passage of the soul from this world to Heaven need not, however, cost us a moment's anxiety, since this is amply provided for in the wisdom and power of God. He will take care of its flight, and see to it that its pinions are spread in the right direction. There is not the slightest danger that a spirit, prepared for the heavenly world, and summoned by God to that world, will make a mistake, and go to the wrong world.

Christ tells us that Lazarus when he died was "carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom," or society; and it may be that angels perform a similar service to every good man at death. Our Saviour said to the penitent thief on the cross: "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." This implies that both would be in Paradise on the very day in which they died. Jesus had no difficulty in passing up into Paradise when life became extinct in His body of flesh and blood. The penitent thief had none in going there; and we shall have none if our names are "written in the Lamb's book of life." Although we may not here see precisely how the passage will be made, we shall cer-

tainly not miss the way. Millions of redeemed spirits have made the journey, and not one of them was lost amid the starry orbs. Every one of them took the path that led directly to Heaven.

The Bible doctrine of angels sheds some light on this subject, since these angels are presented to us, not only as existing in Heaven, but also as often leaving that Heaven and coming to earth, and then going back to the Heaven from which they came. Facts of this kind are scattered all through the Bible record. Heaven is not so far from earth that, whatever may be the distance between the two, angels cannot readily make the passage from the one to the other. The ninth chapter of Daniel contains a striking illustration to this effect.

Daniel was engaged in prayer ; and, at the beginning of his supplication, the angel Gabriel in Heaven received a command from God to go forth and show certain things unto him. Before the prayer was ended—as Daniel himself says, “Yea, while I was speaking in prayer” —this angel, “being caused to fly swiftly,” stood by his side in a human form, and told him that, at the beginning of his supplication, he had received the commandment to go forth, and had come in obedience thereto. Whatever may be the distance between Heaven and earth, and whether the former is within or beyond

the region of the fixed stars, the time occupied by this angelic messenger in going from Heaven and making a visit to Daniel, was not longer than this good man's prayer. Gabriel had no difficulty in finding the earth, or the spot where Daniel was praying. His errand was quickly executed. The distance between Heaven and earth was not an impassable barrier to his wing.

And so, when Herod had imprisoned Peter, one of God's angels came down from Heaven, came to the prison where the apostle was confined, took the chains off from his hands, opened the prison doors and led him out in safety. The angels in Heaven, according to the record in the Bible, have often left that world and come to this in the execution of God's will. Their visits to earth are by no means an inconspicuous portion of the supernatural providence of God toward mankind. Though not men, and though this world is not their residence, they have had much to do with many a chapter in human history, and may still have far more to do with that history than is ordinarily supposed.

Let it, then, be observed that there is no more difficulty, in the soul's departure from earth and going to Heaven, than there is in the departure of angels from Heaven and coming to earth. The former is just as supposable as the latter, and that both are facts is affirmed in the

Word of God. No matter what may be the distance between Heaven and earth, an angelic spirit can easily span that distance; and a human spirit released from the body, and guided and energized by the hand of God, can do the same thing. Moses and Elijah did this, when they reappeared on earth and talked with the Saviour on the Mount of Transfiguration. The velocity of purely spiritual motion may, by millions of times, exceed that of the electric current, and may, indeed, be so great that scarcely a second intervenes between the death of the body on earth and the presence of the redeemed spirit in Heaven. Earth and Heaven, however different and however widely separated from each other, are not so different and not so wide apart, that a human soul cannot go from this world to that, and that angels cannot descend from that world to this. Intercourse between the two worlds, in this sense, is as plainly declared in the Bible as is the existence of God or any other fact or doctrine of revelation.

We are to keep in mind that the redeemed soul, as it retires from this world and passes up to the heavenly world, does not do so by its own unaided power. God Himself is present with His power. He made that soul and put it into a mortal body; and He takes it away at the time appointed, leaving the body to return to the dust as it was, while the spirit returns

unto the God who gave it. He is competent, in less than "the twinkling of an eye," to connect the departure of the soul from earth with its arrival in its celestial home. We may not be able to trace its flight; yet there are no difficulties in the problem which God cannot solve. What the poet says may be a true picture of the fact just as it occurs:

One gentle sigh the bondage breaks ;  
We scarce can say—he's gone !  
Before the willing spirit takes  
Its mansion near the throne.

What a contrast of conditions connected with that "gentle sigh!" This wearisome life ended! Its last act done, and its last pain felt! The body left to await its fate in the grave! Earth left for another and a better world! The passage to Heaven finished! The life of Heaven and life in Heaven begun! The glories of the heavenly world bursting upon the spirit's eye! The melodies of that world greeting its ear! The joyous salutations of angels and of "the spirits of just men made perfect!" The heirship of God and the joint-heirship with Christ fully realized! The vision of the Mediator of the new covenant! The approving smile of God! Faith in its earthly form succeeded by celestial experience! Endless blessedness chanting its first note! Yes—what a change was that which terminated the career of one life and

opened that of another? How quick! How complete! One moment on earth! The next moment in Heaven!

How, then, shall one prepare himself for this transit to the heavenly world? Ah, reader, that is a very wise question for you to ask! You do well to ask it; and you will do better if you hear and follow the answer which God gives in His Word. The question implies that there is something to be done here, as the antecedent of going to Heaven hereafter; and this implication is true. Not all men go there, but only those whose moral state fits them for the heavenly life; and, as to the qualities of this moral state the Bible pours a flood of light. Read that Book and you will not be ignorant of the way of life. Tread in that way and you will be sure of Heaven when you die. Decline to do this and you will be just as sure not to go there. The important thing for you is to prepare for Heaven. Doing this, you will have the supreme wisdom in comparison with which all other wisdom sinks into insignificance.



## CHAPTER III.

### THE HEAVENLY SOCIETY.

THAT God, in creating man, intended to form him for society, and not solitude, is evident alike from his mental structure and physical organization. The former gives him a strong and permanent desire for intercourse with others, and in such intercourse locates no small part of his happiness. The latter makes the intercourse unavoidable, and supplies the facility therefor. The result of the two forces, acting together, is that man is a social being by the very terms of his existence. God said of Adam : "It is not good that the man should be alone." Eve was the needed complement. What was true in the Garden of Eden has been true ever since, and will be to the end of time.

A vast assemblage of important facts in the history of this world, that otherwise would not exist at all, has its basis and source in the social constitution of things. The relations and mutual dependencies of human beings ; the accumulation and increase of productive power by combined and concurrent action ; the exer-

cise and discipline of virtue, and the formation of moral character, in the sphere of life's obligations and duties ; the family with all its comforts and blessings ; the nation with its government and laws ; the education of one human being by another ; the influence which men exercise over each other ; the charities and tender affections which sweeten and bless our earthly existence, and do so much to ameliorate its miseries ; the pleasures that stand connected with social intercourse ; the exchanges among men of the products of their industry and their mutual helpfulness thereby ; the transmissions by which all generations are bound together as a continuous race—all these results arise from the social principle in human life.

It is true that evils come from the same source, yet they are to be regarded as the fruits of perversion, rather than as inevitable consequences of the principle. The arrangement was not established for the sake of the evils, but to secure its manifest benefits ; and, even with the evils, it is a wise and beneficent order of things.

The natural presumption, from what we observe in this life, is that the social principle operates in Heaven as really as it does here, not necessarily in all the forms and relations of earth, and certainly not with the evils attending it here, but in some form that makes Heaven a social state. The idea of absolute

isolation and solitude in that world excludes all the social virtues which the Bible both commands and commends. That "charity" which never faileth, would, on this supposition, be impossible in Heaven. The affections of the heart toward created beings would have no sphere for their action or expression. Man, if admitted into Heaven, would need to be essentially changed, in order to fit him for a residence in that world.

No such idea—indeed, nothing suggesting it even by the remotest hint—appears in the Bible. One who reads that Book naturally thinks of Heaven as a *place*, in distinction from all other places, and, as such, furnishing the residence of intelligent and conscious beings; and, although these beings are presented to the eye of thought as distinct and separate individuals, they are equally presented as a *community* of spirits, related to each other by residence, nature, and character, having knowledge of each other, holding intercourse with each other, exercising affection toward each other, sharing in the same joys, engaging in the same employments and services—in a word, forming a heavenly society.

Christians in all ages have so read and understood the Bible. Their construction lies upon the very face of its language. Christ, since His resurrection and ascension, has specially dwelt

in Heaven in "His glorious body;" and Paul desired to depart from this world, and dwell with Christ in the same Heaven. He regarded his presence here in the body as an absence from the Lord, and was willing rather to be absent from the body that he might be present with the Lord.

We cannot here penetrate all the unrevealed secrets of Heaven, and make ourselves as familiar with them as we are with the facts of earth, and should not attempt to do so. But that the social principle, in some form, exists in Heaven, is evident from what the Bible says about that world.

The inhabitants of Heaven are, in general, characterized as holy beings, without exception and without imperfection. John, referring to Christians in Heaven, declares that they are like Christ; and, if so, then they are holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. Heaven being set forth under the symbol of a beautiful city, the Bible says: "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." The Bible also speaks of Heaven as the place "wherein dwelleth righteousness." Paul, having said that the "unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God," specifies various classes of persons embraced in this general

description, and, in respect to them all, renews the statement that they "shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

The heavenly society is hence a perfectly holy society, in which no wrong is ever done or suffered, and no evil passion ever cherished. The whole catalogue of moral evils, whether of thought, feeling, or action, and all the miseries resulting therefrom, which so disfigure and afflict society in this world, are wholly unknown in Heaven. Holy beings, and such only, inhabit that world; and this makes a broad contrast between Heaven and earth.

Some of these beings—yea, millions upon millions of them—began their career in this world, and in bodies of flesh and blood. Here they sinned, and here, by the grace of God through Christ, they were saved from "the wrath to come," and here made "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." John, in his apocalyptic vision, saw "a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," standing "before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands," and saying: "Salvation to our God and unto the Lamb." He heard the question: "What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?" He also heard the answer: "These are they which

came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Of these persons it was said that "they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more," and that "the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters," and that "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

This vision relates to sinners redeemed, who once lived on earth, and who, being redeemed, appeared to John as a celestial orchestra, making the heavenly world ring with their grateful praise.

The truth is that a vast multitude of such sinners have already joined the society of Heaven; and other multitudes will continue to do so until the trump of God shall sound the knell of time. Their names, whether in any earthly record or not, are "written in the Lamb's book of life." Their spiritual condition, in its essential qualities, is identical with that of Heaven. The victories of grace in converting and sanctifying men, and the triumphs of death in translating them, are the two methods by which God fits them for Heaven, and then takes them there, and thus swells the ranks of the redeemed in the skies. Earth will be represented in that world; and what God has done to save sinners will be known there.

The Bible, in both Testaments, brings to our view another and higher order of beings, who, though not inhabitants of this world, have often been here on errands of mercy, and sometimes those of judgment. They are called "holy angels," and also "mighty angels." Unlike those angels that "kept not their first estate," they never sinned, and hence need no redemption. Paul designates them as "an innumerable company of angels." Some of them came to earth at the birth of Jesus, and sang the song of praise to God and good-will to men. There is joy among them whenever one sinner repenteth. When Christ shall come the second time these angels will come with Him. Though not of the human race, they are not entirely foreign to that race. The Saviour speaks of them as God's angels "in Heaven," thus fixing their habitation in that world. John, recording what he saw in a supernatural vision, tells us that "all the angels stood round about the throne," and "fell before the throne on their faces and worshipped God." God, in the Bible, is represented as being surrounded by hosts of angels in Heaven. They are denizens of what Paul calls the "heavenly Jerusalem."

Redeemed sinners, in being transferred to Heaven, will then not only join the society of other redeemed sinners who have gone there before them, but will enter into companionship

with "the angels of God in Heaven." They will find, in both respects, a society more exalted, more intelligent, more select, more glorious, and much happier, than any that can be found on earth. The best created minds of the universe are there.

The Bible has a still better vision for human thought. Jesus Christ—the Man Divine, the Great Immanuel, the Mediator of the new covenant, the Redeemer of sinners—when He had finished His work on earth ascended into Heaven. Mark says that "He was received up into Heaven and sat on the right hand of God." Paul says that He "sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high," and that God, having raised Him from the dead, "sat Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places." Being on earth God manifest in the flesh, "seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles," and "believed on in the world," He was finally "received up into glory." His personal presence on earth ended by a glorious ascension into Heaven; and He is there as the High Priest of our profession, and the Advocate and Intercessor for all His people.

The Lamb of God, whom John the Baptist announced, is the Lamb of God who dwells in Heaven, and is there worshipped by saints and angels. His royal title there is that of "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."



Sinners, here redeemed by the blood of Christ, will in Heaven meet their Lord and Saviour, there see and know Him, and there be present with Him, and that, too, with an intimacy and perfection of intercourse not possible here. As He loved them and was their gracious friend in time, so He will love them and be their gracious friend in Heaven, recognizing them as "joint heirs" with Him. They loved and trusted Him on earth, and they will love and trust Him in Heaven. They communed with Him here, and they will do so there, without the impediments of flesh and blood. Faith will be superseded by vision, and celestial experience will take the place of that which was earthly and less perfect. The intercourse between the saved and the Saviour will be more direct, more self-certifying, and transporting than it was or could be here.

Paul was not mistaken when he thought it better to depart and to be with Christ than to abide in the flesh. He must here at the best see "through a glass darkly;" but there he would see "face to face." Christ in Heaven, as our Redeemer and Saviour, dwelling there in His "glorious body," there willing our happiness, and there admitting us into intimate and sweet communion, is, and, to the Christian heart, ever must be, the great attraction of that blessed world. He said, in the days of His

flesh, that, if we confess Him before men, He would confess us before His Father and the holy angels. This promise, its conditions being complied with on our part, He will not fail to make good in Heaven.

The throne of God, in the language of the Bible, is spoken of as being in Heaven. The meaning is not that God is so localized there as to exclude His omnipresence, but that He is there specially manifested as He is not elsewhere. Heaven, in this sense, is the habitation of God, and in this sense He dwells there. If the tabernacle and the temple were His habitation on earth, then much more is Heaven His habitation. Intercourse with Him there is more direct and complete than it is here. Though the finite cannot fully comprehend the Infinite, Heaven will greatly exalt our knowledge of God, and greatly facilitate our communion with Him. We shall there dwell with Him, and He with us, in a sense and to an extent that exceed the utmost possibility of saintship in the present world.

Paul's theology, alike of the head and the heart, though not contradicting what it was here, has reached a far higher level there than it ever did here. Enoch's walk with God in Heaven goes beyond that of earth. The same must be true of all saints upon their admission into the heavenly world. That is a better

world than this in which to commune with God.

Whatever Heaven may, then, be as a place, the fact that it is a social state, and that the society thereof consists in redeemed and sanctified sinners of the human race, in "an innumerable company of angels," in the Mediator of the new covenant, and in God Himself as specially manifested, makes it superlatively grand and superlatively desirable. The idea of Heaven is, in the Bible, given under many forms; and the social aspect is among the grandest and most impressive of them all. The people who dwell in a country are far more important than its climate or its soil, its mountains or its valleys, its rivers or its lakes; and so the dwellers in Heaven constitute the great charm of that world.

It is not possible to conceive of existence under more inviting auspices than those furnished by the society of Heaven, or of an earthly life more wisely planned than that which secures a membership in this society. The thought of existence, under such benign auspices, scatters the gloom and darkness which overhang death. A most precious comfort is derived therefrom as we meditate upon our final exit from the scenes of time. This exit, frightful as it may seem in some respects, and painful as may be the separations which it involves, is

simply the transference of the soul to a glorious place, made more glorious by those who are there. Believe that, ye dwellers upon earth ! Love and serve God here and then die in peace !

Well may the Christian, in view of this thought, join in the grateful salutation of Jude :  
“ Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, now and ever. Amen.”

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE HEAVENLY HOME.

POETRY, true to the facts of life, and also the instincts of the heart, has in every age sung of the joys and the pleasures of home. The song will never lose its charm, and genius never forget to sing it. It is the song of all the ages and as immortal as the race.

Home, considered as the mansion and throne of the family, is the select abode of our best earthly pleasures, as well as of the sweetest, surest and most enduring friendships. The truest confidence here builds its altar, and here the kindest services are rendered and received. Human sympathy has here its best opportunity and freest play, and here the strongest influence is exercised and felt. Here we find the nursery for the infant, the hospital for the diseased, and the support and comfort of helpless age. Home is pre-eminently man's sacred spot on earth, distinguished from all others, and better known to him than any other. If permitted to choose, he would prefer here to draw his last breath. One who, by perversion, is miserable here is

really happy nowhere. Without the home and without the family as its natural adjunct, we should be worse than barbarians.

It is no matter of surprise that the pang of grief which death brings to the home should have a pungency, a sharpness, a depth and permanence felt nowhere else, and known only to those who have experienced it. A familiar face is gone, and a familiar voice is heard no more. A soul tenderly loved has been withdrawn, and a cherished body of flesh and blood is buried in the dust. A dear friend is out of sight, and all intercourse with that friend is at an end. What has become of the spirit, the mind, the soul, the essential selfhood of that friend—that which in life made him what he was in the home, and largely made home what it was—yes, where has that gone and what is it?

Some answer to this question is one of the deepest necessities of thought. Who has not felt its urgency? We cannot get rid of it if we would, and would not if we could. Answered or unanswered, we cannot suppress it. Our observation does not cross the gulf of death and thus supply the answer; and the dead do not recross that gulf and tell the tale. We may look out at sun, moon, and stars, and pierce the depths of space with telescopic sight; and not the faintest hint will reach us concerning the dead. No merely scientific research will bring

to us the desired answer. The chemist cannot find it in his laboratory, and it does not come at the call of the metaphysician who dissects mental phenomena. Speculative fancy may roam in whatever field it chooses, and it will at last end substantially where it began. If we invent answers as a relief to thought, we cannot verify their truth.

The matter of fact is that, if unaided by the special, the supernatural help of God, we cannot locate a departed spirit anywhere, or see it anywhere, or tell what it is doing or how it is situated. Its condition baffles our intensest scrutiny. If it sings, we do not hear the song; and if it weeps, we do not hear the wail. An impenetrable curtain is before our eyes; and God must come to our help, and speak to us from the other side, or we must live and die with the question unanswered. Bishop Butler's analogical argument in regard to the future life does little more than prepare us to hear what God has to say. The mere possibility, or even rational probability of such a life, does not sufficiently answer the question which the heart raises, when rent with anguish over the loss of one it loved with intensest affection, and whom, though gone, it continues to love. The question is not merely one of intellectual curiosity. It is profoundly a heart-question, working its way through the tenderest sensibilities of the soul.

One of the forms in which God has by His Word responded to this question, and thereby rendered to man a much-needed service, is indicated by the title placed at the head of this chapter. That Word gives to us the idea of a heavenly home for those who are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, to which they go at death, and in which they dwell forever. Assuming our knowledge of the joys and blessings of the earthly home, it uses this knowledge as the facility and medium of presenting to us the conception of a better home in Heaven. Accepting the doctrine of Heaven coming to us in this form, thinking of it as the Bible thinks, speaking of it as God speaks of it, and patiently waiting for further light until we shall see as we are seen and know as we are known, we shall keep ourselves out of the region of useless speculation, and within the circle where revelation shines. This will, to some extent, relieve our present darkness by light from another world.

Our Saviour, when on His way to Jerusalem for the last time before His death, spoke to His disciples of the event then so near at hand; and, although they did not fully understand the import of His words, they nevertheless saw that a tragedy was awaiting Him and them. Their hearts were troubled; and it was with reference to this state of mind that those gra-



cious words, which have been the delight of millions, fell so sweetly from His lips: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. 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 and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

Christ knew how to talk to these disciples, and, in talking to them, to speak to all men. His words fitted their wants, and equally fit those of the race. The central idea of His language is that of a dwelling-place, a heavenly home, for those who are His friends and followers, prepared for them by Him, secured to them by Him, in which they will exist after death, where He will receive them unto Himself, and where they will be forever with their Lord. Still continuing to exist, they will have their home in God's great house of many mansions; and Christ Himself will be with them there, and they with Him. Death, in taking them out of this world, will not make them homeless. Such is the meaning that lies upon the face of the Saviour's words.

Contenting ourselves with this meaning, and receiving into our minds and hearts the impression and comfort thereof, we can well afford to drop all merely curious questions, and, as little

children, simply believe the words of Christ. His words bring to faith and hope the heavenly home, whither He has already gone, and where He will receive His people unto Himself when they leave this world and enter the spirit-realm. There is, to a stricken and bleeding heart, more light in these words than in all the speculations ever invented by the wisest philosophy of earth. The sainted friend whom we have loved and lost is in the heavenly home. God called him first and will soon call us. If we have enjoyed our earthly homes why should we not anticipate higher and purer joy in the one to which we are going, and thank God for the revelation and the gift of such a home? Earth can furnish no home for the soul equal to the one Christ has prepared for us in the Heaven above, and in which He will receive us unto Himself, that where He is there we may be also. His words on this subject are God's words, and may, therefore, be trusted with unhesitating faith.

What the soul really wants is not a philosophy of mere human learning, forever raising questions which it cannot answer, but rather the philosophy of simple faith which, though less pretentious, makes the words of Christ alike real, impressive, and cheering. He has chosen to set before us the doctrine of Heaven arrayed in the charms of one of earth's best ideas—that of sweet and happy home; and we can do no

better than to let these charms feed and fill our thoughts while they bless and delight our hearts. The words fit the idea they were meant to convey ; and it will be perfectly safe to receive them just as they fell from His lips. Let poetry sing them. Let the pulpit preach them. Let saintship think them, and in death chant them.

So, also, the Saviour, in that wonderful prayer of intercession which preceded His sufferings on the cross said : " Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me ; for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." Residence with Christ in the same Heaven to which He has gone and in which He dwells, is the thought that appears in these words. It is His will that such a residence should be accorded to those whom the Father had given Him, and who would there behold His glory.

The apostle had this idea in mind when he expressed the desire to depart and to be with Christ, and also when he spoke of his presence in the body as an absence from the Lord, and said that he was " willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." He thought of a place which in his conception was Heaven, and in which Christ was personally and specially present ; and of that place he thought as the future home of his

soul. He expected at death to go there and there dwell forever with his Lord. And this is precisely the thought which Christ gave to His disciples just before His own death, and gives to all who believe His Word and receive His grace. His work on earth and His work in Heaven assure us that this thought will be realized. Though now unseen by our carnal eyes, Christ is not dead. His power is not dead ; His grace is not dead ; His offices are not dead ; and that which He has declared is the truth that is and is to be. His Word makes it certain that His people will be with Him where He is and there behold His glory.

We cannot now grasp all the details and the full dimensions of the vast idea ; yet we can see enough to be impressed with the fact that the heavenly home of saintship is and must be a glorious place. The Bible intends that we shall so think of it, and by the thought seeks to influence our present action. It directs us to set our "affection on things above," that are not seen and are eternal, and "not on things on the earth," that are seen and also temporal.

Paul, the great apostle to the Gentiles, taught, as he expressly declares, "by the revelation of Jesus Christ," says : "For we know that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the

Heavens." "For we know" is the language used by the apostle. We do not guess at it. We do not merely suppose it. "We know." How did Paul know? Not by reason, but "by the revelation of Jesus Christ." Christ had revealed the truth to him. Reading and believing His words as of inspired authority, and accepting the Saviour whom he accepted, we may use the same words with equal confidence and equal triumph. They are as true of all Christians as they were of Paul.

The body of flesh and blood, which for the present we inhabit, is here described as "our earthly house of this tabernacle." It is a "house," earthly in its structure and earthly in its place, and, in its uses, like a tent or "tabernacle," in which the traveller lodges at night, and which he takes down as he pursues his journey in the morning. This body was referred to in the preceding context as the "outward man" that "perisheth," in contrast with the "inward man" that "is renewed day by day." Here the "outward man" that "perisheth" is set before us under the figure of a "house" that has the character of a tent or "tabernacle."

Suppose, now, that this bodily "tabernacle" should be "dissolved" or taken down, so that the soul is no longer in it, what, then, in the contemplation of Paul's mind, is the thing that

would immediately ensue? Suppose the "outward man" to perish, what, then, awaits the "inward man"? The apostle says that "we"—distinct from the "tabernacle" that is "dissolved," and surviving that dissolution—"have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens." This is the direct sequel as he declares it. It is true that we shall lose the "earthly house of this tabernacle." That will be laid away to moulder in the grave. The chemistry of nature will destroy it altogether. We shall, however, gain another residence—another and a better home for the soul; and that home, in the language of the apostle, is "a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens." The contrast between it and what we leave when dying is a very strong one. Death, in the light of this contrast, works a very desirable change. Immensely more is gained than lost.

Let it be conceded that the language of the apostle is that of metaphor; yet let it not be forgotten that the metaphor has a meaning, and was intended to convey an idea and make an impression. The metaphor is not larger than the reality. It is true that the Christian dead is absent from the body and absent from this world; and it is just as true that he is present in the heavenly home, in the "house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens," and that

the latter is a vastly better abode than the body or this world ever was or could be. This is the truth in which Paul believed, and which he taught others to believe. With this truth he cheered his own life on earth ; and when that life was about to close he anticipated for himself a happier and better life and a better home in the world above.

The same apostle, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, speaks of sinners redeemed and saved by Christ, whether in Heaven or on earth, as a "family." These are his words : "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in Heaven and earth is named." Such sinners constitute one "family," one sacred and glorious brotherhood of saintship, having one Saviour and one God the Father, whether their home be in Heaven or upon earth. The dead members of this "family" are already in their heavenly home. Some of them have been there for centuries ; and those who are yet to die will go there when death withdraws them from this world. All the redeemed children of God will at last be gathered in the family mansion in the skies. God has established for them one final home ; and though part of them may now be here and part of them there, the "whole family" will ultimately dwell in the "house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens." God

Himself is the builder of that house. The separations between the members of this "family" which death makes here, will be followed by the reunions which Heaven makes hereafter.

We need not, and, if wise, will not, perplex our ignorance with questions which we cannot, and the Bible does not, answer. It will be quite sufficient to let the Bible guide our thoughts on this subject. We do not know more than that Book, and, aside from it we know nothing as to what awaits us after death. We learn from the Bible that in Christ we have a High Priest who, having finished His work on earth, passed into the Heavens; that this High Priest there sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high; that for those who love and serve Him He has prepared a dwelling-place in the skies; that this place will be their future and eternal home; that they will there dwell with Christ forever and there behold His glory; and that, when the earthly house of their tabernacle shall be dissolved, as it will be by death, they will at once go to this home—this building of God, this house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.

These are verities of revelation and not the speculations of mere reason. God has put them in His written Word; and it is by these verities, just as they lie in that Word, that He seeks to instruct and guide our thoughts and inspire



our hopes. They are glorious things for faith to receive upon the divine authority, and we can do no better with our minds or with them than to fix our thoughts upon them, affirming them in the simplicity of unquestioning faith, and thus opening our hearts to the comfort they are suited to impart.

A speculating, half-doubting, and half-believing faith, that cannot content itself with the Word of God, that seeks to be wise above what is written, and is never really *trustful*, is not the kind of faith that brings good news to the soul. It reasons and speculates too much and believes too little for its own comfort. God's Word is not sufficiently its absolute authority and guide; and hence the joys and blessings of that Word are not consciously realized in their fullest measure. This Word is most largely the comfort of those who most implicitly bow to its authority. The secret of the Lord is with them as it is not and cannot be with doubters and cavillers.

Go, reader, to the chamber of death, and there behold two Christian friends, intimately related in life, and tenderly loving each other, but now exchanging their final farewells in time. The interview will soon close, and one of these friends will remain, while the other will go to the spirit-world. The interview has closed, and the last words on earth have passed between

them. The mysterious and awful separation has occurred. The one is dead and the other living. The survivor wants comfort. His heart beats with the pulsation of intense anguish. Guided by the teaching of the Bible, he is now thinking of his friend gone, with whom he will never exchange another thought on earth. He is thinking of what has happened to that friend and what death was to him. Questions of the intensest interest burst upon him, and clamor for an answer. He cannot dismiss them, and does not wish to do so.

Fortunately for this survivor, he has a Bible in his possession, and still more fortunately, he is not only familiar with it as a reader, but a believer in the truths it reveals. These blessed truths now come to his relief ; and of the friend just snatched away from him he thinks, not as being destroyed, not as harmed in his essential existence by dying, not as a loser by leaving the body, but as a dweller in God's house of many mansions, and as absent from the body and from earth only to be present with the Lord. That friend, to his thought, has gone to the heavenly home and is there. He so believes upon the authority of God's Word ; and thus thinking and believing, he knows where that friend is, and that it is well with him. He surely will not sorrow as those do and must who have no hope. His thought is the one that dries up

the mourner's tear, and soothes the bitter pang of grief. Lacerated affection sings for joy. A new charm is added to the celestial home, and a new reason supplied for wishing to go there. Millions upon millions of weepers have thus, to their great relief, bathed their anguished spirits in the living fountain of God's precious truth. No other comfort was equal to their wants. That alone met the exigency.

Go, again, reader, to the chamber of death ; and there you see this survivor, perhaps in old age, about to follow his departed friend to the world of spirits. His final hour has at length come. Having finished his course and kept the faith, he now consoles his last moments with the thought that the event so near at hand will be to him simply a translation from his earthly home to his home in Heaven—that home which has so long been the object of his faith, whose joys and glories he has so often chanted in song, and where the dear friend he lost will be found again. He reads his title clear to mansions in the skies, and waits for death to place him there. He praises God for what he anticipates. He closes his eyes in death and opens them in Heaven. He is there and there meets his Saviour, and there meets the saints of all ages. Once a stranger and a pilgrim on the earth, he is now at home in a peaceful and happy Heaven.

Let saintship on earth as well as saintship in

Heaven praise and bless God for the heavenly home. This home in the land of spirits, made known to us in the Word of God, and by that Word guaranteed to those who are "the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," imparts a good cheer to this life, scatters the shadows that would otherwise overhang death, and presents to the eye of faith a brilliant prize to be won by Christian virtue. May God give us the wisdom so to live in this world that we shall spend our eternity in the heavenly home.

As when the weary traveller gains  
The height of some o'erlooking hill,  
His heart revives, if 'cross the plains,  
He eyes his home though distant still :

So when the Christian pilgrim views,  
By faith, his mansion in the skies,  
The sight his fainting strength renews,  
And wings his speed to reach the prize.

'Tis there, he says, I am to dwell,  
With Jesus in the realms of day :  
Then I shall bid my cares farewell,  
And He will wipe my tears away !

## CHAPTER V.

### THE HEAVENLY LIFE.

THE animating principle upon which the facts and phenomena of our bodily life depend, is to us a profound mystery ; and such it must ever remain. Be this principle what it may, we know that, while it continues to operate, we exist in living bodies, and, through them, in the present world, and that when it ceases to operate, we are dead as to these bodies, and our career on earth ended.

The term " life," hence, practically means, to our thoughts, habitation in the body and in this world, with all the interests and attachments naturally connected with this fact. Such habitation is the indispensable condition of all that we can here possess or enjoy. Death, in destroying the body, destroys this habitation through the body, and thus terminates our direct connection with everything of an earthly nature.

The desire to live in the body and in this world, rather than to leave the body and go elsewhere, is a universal and ineradicable in-

instinct of the human mind. It is not accidental or local, or the peculiarity of any particular class of minds, but the common feeling of the race. Men naturally prefer to stay where and as they are rather than die. What they know of death alarms them, and what they do not know alarms them. They have the power to destroy their own lives; yet this is rarely, perhaps never done, unless reason has deserted her throne. They will submit to the most painful surgical operations, take the most nauseous medicines, travel in all climes—indeed, endure almost anything—as the means of perpetuating the continuance of life. However severe may be its ills, they still prefer to live rather than die, as the mode of escaping them. They surrender life with reluctance, and would not surrender it at all if the matter were left to their choice.

Satan spoke the truth when he said: "All that a man hath will he give for his life." The veriest miser would part with his last penny, if necessary, to save his life. The fear of death, which nothing but religious faith can relieve, is founded on our strong attachment to life. If men cared nothing about life, they would care as little about death. Death is "the King of Terrors" for two reasons. One is the destruction of life, and the other is our natural timidity as to what may be in the future.

Here, then, in the term "life," as applied to

man, and considered in reference to his body and his existence in that body on earth, we have a word of the utmost practical significance in its relation to human thought and feeling. It means what we highly value and strongly desire to retain. This term, meaning so much to us here, is one of the words which inspiration employs to represent to us the state of the righteous after death, accompanied by other terms which greatly add to its impressive power. The Bible thus utilizes the word ; and, as we are constituted, no better or more expressive term for the purpose can be found in the language of earth.

The Saviour, in enforcing the direction to "enter in at the strait gate," says that "strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life," meaning by "life" the heavenly state after death. He also says : "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life ; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." The "life" here spoken of is the future and heavenly reward of the believer, as contrasted with the punishment of the unbeliever who "shall not see life," and on whom "the wrath of God" is said to abide.

Christ also speaks of the time when all nations shall appear before Him for final judgment, and when He will separate the righteous

from the wicked, "as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." The sequel of that judgment is thus stated: "And these [the wicked] shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." The contrast of destiny here made is between "punishment" and "life," both of which are declared to be "everlasting" or "eternal." "Life" here means the heavenly reward of the righteous.

Paul, referring, in his Second Epistle to Timothy, to the future state, and especially to that of the righteous, speaks of Christ as having "brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." He also says, in his First Epistle to Timothy: "But godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that [life] which is to come." Here are two lives—the present and the future; and godliness has the promise of both.

James, speaking of the man who "endureth temptation," as being "blessed," says: "For when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." Here we have the words "crown" and "life" united together, both referring to the heavenly state, and both secured by the Lord to them that love Him. John says: "God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in His Son." The meaning is that in and through Christ, God has provided that we may obtain



“eternal life,” or that state of blessedness in Heaven which He has promised to those who accept the Gospel of Christ.

In these passages, as in many others found in the Bible, Heaven is, by the use of the word “life,” brought within the field of our present vision, just as Hell is disclosed to us by the term “death.” Inspiration, while not inventing either term, uses both, each for its own purpose, and never both for the same purpose. The difference between life and death, considered in relation to our thoughts and feelings, makes the one a fitting term to express the idea of a great future good, and the other an equally fitting term to express the idea of a great future evil; and this is just the use made of these terms respectively in the Word of God.

The term “life,” when thus used, is itself a divine assurance that “the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus” will not, as to their conscious being, be destroyed by death, and hence, in respect to them, answers Job’s question: “If a man die shall he live again?” Death, upon the face of the event, seems terribly destructive, and is so to the body. The life that once pervaded that organism is gone; and, in a comparatively brief period, the organism itself will be gone. All that depended upon it, when living, is also gone; and, moreover, the organism thus destroyed will never be rebuilt in its

present form. The body of flesh and blood will never resume its place in this world, and never inhabit any other world. The wreck to the body, and to all the relations established through it and dependent upon it for their continuance, is in itself an awful spectacle to contemplate. No one can think of it, as it is, unimpressed with this awfulness.

Turning, then, to our soul-life, as distinct from our body-life, we have, in the term "life" itself, as promised to the righteous, the assurance of God's Word that in respect to them, death is not the destruction of that life. The death of the body does not destroy the soul of the saint. His soul is appointed to a future life, after and beyond death ; and this appointment is included in the promise of salvation which God makes to every believer in Christ. Whatever may be the value of the purely rational argument in regard to a future life, and however much or little it may really prove on this subject, the divine promise to the believer settles the question in respect to him. Death will not destroy him. This promise precludes the possibility of such a result. He may, hence, "walk through the valley of the shadow of death" with no fear on this point, and no doubt as to whether his soul will survive the wreck of the body.

Such survival does not depend upon any in-

herent indestructibility of the soul itself, but upon the power and purpose of God ; and this power is in His Word pledged to carry the soul of the believer safely through the bodily catastrophe of death. It is the promise of God, contained in His written Word, that forms the sheet-anchor of the Christian's faith in regard to his own immortality. He believes what God says in the promise, and then believes that his soul will survive the death of the body. God's Word on this point is to him the best of all reasons for so believing.

The promise, however, does not exhaust itself at this point. What is promised is "*eternal life*," not life for a day, or a century, or a thousand centuries, but "*eternal life*," without limitation as to continuance. Our life on earth—a short day even at the longest—glides away by fleeting moments ; and soon all of it is gone. The irreversible decree of God compels us, after a brief period, to leave the body and leave the earth with all its attractions. Not so will it be with the life of the soul in Heaven. No decree of mortality operates there. In regard to Heaven the Bible says : "And there shall be no more death." Heaven has no cemeteries for the burial of souls. There is no old age in Heaven. The lapse of time involves no decay of powers. All the faculties of the soul are preserved in eternal vigor.

The words "eternal life"—the one a noun and the other an adjective, each adding its own significance to that of the other—have a vast weight of meaning. The "life," which is declared to be "eternal," is that of a conscious and intelligent being, shown by his history on earth to be wondrously endowed and capable of endless expansion. What marvellous possibilities of good are enshrined in these two words, when thus combined, and applied to such a being! We need feel no surprise when told that it doth not yet fully appear what we shall be. An eternal soul-life passes beyond the highest possible conception of earth.

So, also, the contents and conditions of this "eternal life," as well as its endless perpetuity, place it, in the element of desirableness, immensely in advance of the best possible state on earth. It is a life lived in the heavenly world, and in the heavenly society; and to this earth can furnish no parallel. It is the life of perfect holiness, being that of "the spirits of just men made perfect," and is, hence, the life of perfect happiness. It is, after the resurrection, life in the "spiritual body," which is incorruptible, powerful, glorious, and fitted to Heaven, and also fashioned like unto the "glorious body" of Christ. It is the life of co-residence and joint-heirship with Christ in Heaven, and of the most intimate intercourse

and communion with Him. It is the life in which all the causes of our present misery are forever absent. It is the life of enlarged and enlarging capacities of both knowledge and happiness. It is the life in which God rewards piety for its work on earth, and admits the soul into blessed communion with Himself. It is the life in which the gracious promises of the Bible relating to the future state have their completion and fulfilment.

No such conditions and no such perfect elements of good are possible in this imperfect state. Life on earth, even in its most fascinating form, with its richest pleasure and fewest ills, is not and cannot be made that of Heaven. We make no mistake of overestimate when thinking of the heavenly life as realizing to man the highest good of which he is capable.

The God of the Bible, in selecting this term "life" as a symbol of heavenly things, and throughout the entire Book, seeks to convey to us the idea that our supreme good is not and cannot be here, but is and must be in Heaven. He calls our attention mainly, not to the things which are seen and temporal, but to the things which are not seen and eternal. In the latter, and not in the former, lies our supreme good. Those of whom the Bible speaks as having died in the Lord, and as sleeping in Jesus, have already attained this good. They had their ap-

pointed day of trials, difficulties, and temptations on earth. They knew by experience what this life means. They bowed their heads under the weight of affliction, and many anxieties crossed their path. Events were not always what they desired. The rod of providence chastened and cultured them. They never forgot to read their Bible true, and the promise true, hearing God in the one, and trusting Him in the other. Death, at length, came—to some in youth, to others in middle age, and to still others in declining years. Each at the appointed time and place, and in the appointed way, heard the final summons, and passed up into the heavenly world.

All these persons—yea, all the righteous dead who, in ages past, have finished their course on earth and won the prize of “eternal life,” have gained the supreme good. They know what it is to live in this world, and what it is to live in the heavenly world. Their experience covers both worlds. They are to be congratulated on having lived here as they did, on having died when they did, and on now living where and as they do. They understand, as we do not, and as once they did not, what “eternal life” means.

Some of these sainted ones were perchance our kindred, according to the flesh, still living in memory as objects of the tenderest interest,

though seen and heard no more. We have buried them, but have not forgotten them. Knowing them as we did here, and knowing that their lives were "hid with Christ in God," we are privileged to think of them as now living the "eternal life" of Heaven. They have gone where our senses cannot follow them, but not where our faith cannot follow them. Their spirits are not in the grave, but in Heaven, never more conscious and never more active than at this moment. We should not sorrow over them as those who have no hope. God's Word contains glorious things concerning them, and glorious comforts for us. If we are here what they were here, it will not be long before we shall be what they are now. A few years at the most, perhaps a few days, will suffice to put us in Heaven. Let us dry up our tears, patiently bear our sorrows, and cheerfully wait for our appointed time.

Paul tells us that, while "godliness" has "the promise of the life that now is," it also has the promise of the life "which is to come." The "godliness" of which he speaks is neither a mystery nor an impracticability. It is the "godliness" of faith in Christ as the Saviour of sinners, and of obedience to the precepts of His Word. To this "godliness" is annexed the promise of "eternal life." It is, hence, the one thing needful; and in its acquisition lies

the highest human wisdom. Not to attain it is to commit the fatal mistake. To die without it is to lose "eternal life." What we are to be and to do, in order "to inherit eternal life," is the first and the last, and the only great question that can be asked or answered in this world. All other questions are merely temporal in their significance, and will soon be of no importance whatever.

The time for asking this question, and hearing the answer from the Word of God, and then following it, and thereby gaining that "godliness" that has the promise of the life "which is to come," is in the present life. Death forever shuts the door of our gracious opportunities; and what we do to secure "eternal life" must be done prior to that event, or it will be of no avail. He who declines the "godliness" in this life which has the promise of "eternal life" hereafter, hoping that a like opportunity will greet him in that *hereafter*, and that he will then and there improve it by a *post-mortem* faith and repentance, is to the last degree imprudent and unreasonable in his course. Not one single passage in the whole Word of God commends his course, or intimates that it can be taken with safety to the soul. The theory of the Bible is that "now is the accepted time," and that "now is the day of salvation."



## CHAPTER VI.

### THE HEAVENLY INHERITANCE.

THE procession of generations, each coming into life by individual births, and each retiring therefrom by individual deaths, presents a wonderful spectacle in the divine arrangement of our present existence. Both movements are so regulated and graded to each other that, while the individual dies, the race lives in a series of coming and retiring generations.

These generations, as they come and go, move along the track of life in groups, the members of which, though in all these groups made "of one blood," are allied together under the law of kinship, and thus exist as parents and children, brothers and sisters, and other remoter descendants of a common parentage. These components of each family group, while holding general relations to society as a whole, and to the race as a whole, also hold special relations to each other. These special relations furnish the basis of certain established and fixed laws, giving rise to a class of facts in our present social life which are represented by the

terms "heir," "heirship," "inherit," and "inheritance."

Thus the worldly possessions of a deceased owner or proprietor thereof, unless otherwise disposed of by will, or justly liable for his debts, become, at his death, the possessions of his children born in lawful wedlock, if he has any, and if not, then of his next nearest of kin in the descending line. Such descendants are spoken of as "heirs;" and their relation to the deceased proprietor is one of "heirship." They "inherit," in the circumstances stated, his possessions at the time of his death, and prior to his death are called heirs apparent or presumptive. What they thus receive is designated as an "inheritance."

The laws, or usages, or both, regulating this transmission of private property from one generation to another, are so general and widespread among men that the terms in use to represent the facts have substantially the same meaning in all ages and countries. The facts themselves are perpetuated as being in accordance with the sense of the race.

Human life on earth, in this way, supplies a basis for a class of conceptions and a class of words which inspiration utilizes in setting before us the relation of Christians to God, in what they now are, and in what awaits them in the life to come, as derived from the system of

grace established in the Gospel of Christ, and carried into effect by His mission and work on earth. The terms "heir," "heirship," "inherit," and "inheritance," appear in the Word of God for this purpose; and through them both the present and the future of the Christian are disclosed. Though not invented by inspiration, they are appropriated to serve its ends. The terms furnish a fitting rhetoric for the ideas meant to be conveyed. There is no difficulty in understanding their import.

The Bible, in giving us these ideas, sets out with the broad assumption, which it often affirms, that men, in their unregenerate state, are sinners against God, aliens from Him, "strangers from the covenants of promise," the enemies of God by wicked works, and that, considered in this condition, they are "the children of wrath," "having no hope, and without God in the world." They are spoken of as disobedient, as law-breakers, and as having the carnal mind which is "enmity against God."

Though children of God by creation, and though His sun shines alike upon the evil and the good, and His rain descends upon the just and the unjust, still these aliens and strangers do not come within the scope of the Scripture promise. God has written no covenant of good in their favor, and made no pledge for their good in either world. His language in regard to

their character is that of stern rebuke and denunciation, and, in regard to their final destiny, that of awful menace. He is represented as being to them "a consuming fire." His lips burn with the monitions of coming wrath. He is not on their side, and they are not on His side.

We should not, and we cannot innocently, ignore or slur over this branch of Bible truth. We may, by so doing, deceive ourselves, if not others ; but we cannot thereby change the truth. That will stand, whatever attitude we assume. The Bible is an awful Book in what it says about the wicked, alike as to their character and destiny. No picture can be drawn in darker colors than those of this Book ; and the wonder is that it should create so little alarm in this world, even among those who, professing to believe in the truth of the picture, act as if they did not so believe.

Setting out, then, with this assumption, and adjusting itself thereto, the Bible, in the disclosures of the Gospel system, introduces to our thoughts the gracious doctrine of divine *adoption*, by which those who are aliens and "children of wrath" may, and millions of them do, become "the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" John, in his Gospel, refers to those who receive Christ, and of them says : "But as many as received Him, to them gave

He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." In one of his Epistles he says of such persons: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." Paul says to the Galatians: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." He also says to them: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." To the Ephesians he speaks of God as "having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ."

These and similar passages contain the Bible doctrine of adoption, by which those who are not the children of God in the spiritual sense may and do become such by faith in Christ Jesus. They believe; and God adopts them in the Gospel sense; and then relations which did not before exist are established between them and God. Moses was not, under the law of nature, the son of Pharaoh's daughter; yet "he became her son" by adoption, and she gave him his name. So sinners, when repentant and believing, become "the children of God" by adoption, and, as the apostle says, receive "the Spirit of adoption," whereby they are enabled to cry: "Abba, Father." Adoption is the word that the Bible uses. Sonship is the new relation created thereby. The alien-

age of sin and condemnation under the law give place to sonship under the Gospel; and those who were "the children of wrath" become "the children of God."

What, then, does the Bible say in regard to these adopted sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty? The answer to this question brings into the field of vision the glorious doctrine of their *heirship*, as a fact established coincidentally with their adoption, and resulting therefrom, and also what the Bible says about their *inheritance* in the life to come.

The apostle having spoken to the Romans as having "received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father," and having said that "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God," proceeds at once to say: "And if children, then heirs — heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." The first form of the statement is general, and is to the effect that the children of God are "heirs." As natural sonship in the family makes one an heir, so sonship by gracious adoption makes one an heir. Paul uses the expressive and impressive word "heir" for the idea he has in mind and means to convey.

The added words, immediately following — namely, "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ" — are still more expressive. They have a vast weight of meaning. These children are,

under the provisions of the Gospel system, heirs to the honors and blessings, here and hereafter, which God has promised in His Word, which He only can bestow, and which immeasurably transcend anything derivable by heirship from the mightiest potentate that ever sat on an earthly throne. Being "the children of God," they are also "heirs of God." The climax of the idea is reached when they are spoken of as "joint heirs with Christ"—that Christ whom God hath appointed as "the heir of all things," whom He "hath highly exalted," to whom He has "given a name which is above every name," "by whom also He made the worlds," and who is "the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person."

To be associated with Christ in an heirship of God, so that it can be said that we are "joint heirs with Christ," and, as such, partakers with Him in the glories attached to Him, and to be so united to Him as to enjoy the privilege of sitting with Him on His throne—which is the idea given in the Bible—all this surely leaves nothing to be gained, and nothing higher to be obtained in the way of honor and glory. This will do for humanity ; and if the Bible stopped here, we might well sing all the melodies ever chanted on earth or in Heaven.

The Bible, however, not only speaks of the heirship and the gracious principles upon which

it is based, but also speaks of the resulting "inheritance." Christ, in the days of His flesh, said that these heirs "shall inherit everlasting life," and also declared that in the final judgment He would say unto them: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Paul speaks of them as "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," using the term "light" as the Scripture symbol of holiness and happiness. He also speaks of them as "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession." This "purchased possession" is Heaven, purchased by the blood of Christ for the heirs of God; and these heirs are now labeled, sealed, and stamped for that Heaven, and this is the "earnest" of their inheritance, to some extent the thing in kind, and hence a foretaste, and also the pledge of grace that the inheritance shall at last be realized.

Peter's description of this inheritance is in these words: "An inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." Mark these characteristics of this inheritance.

First, it is "incorruptible," like the soul it-



self, imperishable and immortal, and, in this respect, unlike all the inheritances that in the short day of life can be received or enjoyed in this world.

Secondly, it is "undefiled," pure in itself, and pure in the method of its attainment, and, in both respects, unlike many of the inheritances of earth.

Thirdly, it "fadeth not away." This means, not only that it continues forever, as opposed to destruction, but also that it forever retains all its original freshness, beauty, and glory. It is an eternal amaranth—a flower that never withers, never changes its color, or loses its bloom. It grows upon the banks of the River of Life, and its richness and fragrance will continue undiminished through all the ages of eternity.

And, finally, this inheritance is "reserved in Heaven" for "the heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ," here spoken of as being "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." It is not here on earth and in time; but is there in that blessed Heaven of which the Bible speaks so often and makes so much. We cannot obtain it—certainly not in its fulness—and yet stay in this world. We must die in order to enter into its complete possession; and when we die, being heirs of God and joint heirs with

Christ, then, and only then, will this incorruptible, undefiled, unfading, and heavenly inheritance become our actual possession. Our experience will then explain Peter's words. Then we shall have an idea of what eye hath not seen and ear hath not heard, and of what it hath not entered into the heart of man fully to conceive. Then we shall see that it did not entirely appear on earth what we were to be, and that death and experience were needed to make the complete disclosure.

A bright, cheering and happifying view is enshrined in the words "heir," "inherit," and "inheritance," as used in the Bible to designate the present status and future condition of the children of God. Oh, how the best things of this life pale in the contrast, and vanish into emptiness! What is there below the stars that will for a moment compare with the heavenly inheritance? What heirship is equal to that of the heirs of God and the joint heirs with Christ?

The poorest beggar that ever crawled on earth, if enriched with this heirship, has the wealth of Heaven in reserve for him, and needs only to die to be dressed in robes of light and become a prince in the skies. He is richer far than the richest man on earth who, though he rolls in all the luxury and splendor of time, is not an heir of God and not a joint heir with Christ. Death will soon strip the latter of all

his possessions in this world, and sink him for the next world into the most absolute poverty. When the things of time fail him, as soon they must, he will be a bankrupt forever.

It is not so with those who, whatever may be their condition here, are the heirs of God, and who, when dying, go to receive the inheritance of the saints in light. These are really the rich men of earth—rich in faith, rich in good works, rich in the hope of glory, rich in Heaven, rich forever. The crown of righteousness is theirs. God Himself is their portion.

Our kindred dead, and sleeping in Jesus as the heirs of God and the joint heirs with Christ, are now in Heaven, and there vastly better off than they ever were or could be here. We miss their presence and mourn their absence, yet our loss is their gain. Though we cannot speak to them as once we did, and they cannot speak to us as once they did, we know that they still exist, and that in the highest conceivable sense it is well with them. God be praised that, as we send forth our anxious thoughts after them, and wish for the utmost possible knowledge in regard to them, this gladsome response through the Bible comes to us from the spirit world. We are not left to sorrow as those who have no hope. Faith hears the echo of their song. Affection congratulates them upon their victory. Resignation accepts their ab-

sence. Hope anticipates the day when the survivor will sing the same song in the same Heaven, and obtain the same victory. All the heirs of God and all the joint heirs with Christ will at last be associated in the same heavenly inheritance. The guaranty of grace applies to them all, and alike secures the wealth of Heaven to them all.

Reader, can you do better than to make it the one business of life to become a partaker of this inheritance? Can you spend your thought and time on a greater object? Can you win a grander prize? What will you do when all else fails, if, in this respect, your life shall prove a total failure? Death will soon meet you; and when it comes, if you are not rich toward God, you will be poor indeed. Pause to think before thinking will be too late. Remember that, while we have a day of grace on earth, in which we may secure this inheritance, that day does not last forever. It brings with it its golden opportunity. This opportunity, if finally lost by misimprovement, can never be recalled. There is great wisdom in seeking the Lord "while He may be found," and in calling upon Him "while He is near."

" There is a line, by us unseen,  
That crosses every path—  
The hidden boundary between  
God's patience and his wrath."

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE HEAVENLY GLORY.

THE word "glory," whether applied to the past, the present, or the future, to objects physical or purely mental and spiritual, to a substance, a quality, or an act, naturally attracts and impresses the human mind. The contents of the term are significant. A glorious man is deemed, for some reason, to be above the level of common humanity. A glorious act is marked by qualities, intellectual or moral, or both, that attract our attention and invite our admiration. The glory of God, whether essential or declarative, is simply God Himself, as He is in His nature or in the manifestation of His attributes. The sun is glorious as the great orb of day. The moon and stars that adorn the night are glorious.

Human nature is so constituted as to be responsive and appreciative when any object, properly coming under the category of glory, passes before its eye. Thought is summoned and emotion excited by such an object. All languages have terms to express this movement of the mind and heart.

It is, doubtless, for this reason that the pencil of inspiration, in selecting the earthly coloring in which to paint the heavenly life of Christian saintship, has chosen the terms "glory," and its derivatives "glorious," "gloriously," and "glorify," to characterize the facts of that life. The terms are fitting ones for the purpose. The idea of the Bible is not that Christians are annihilated at death, or that they pass to a condition inferior to that which they left when dying. The reverse of this—indeed, immensely the reverse—is the uniform idea of the Word of God.

And, in order to set forth this reverse, the Bible applies the term "glory" and its derivatives to the condition and state of the righteous after death. It thus gives us its estimate of them as they retire from things seen and temporal, and enter upon those not seen and eternal. The picture drawn is one of good cheer, and greatly helps the survivor in bearing the grief, and in patiently waiting until his time shall come for the same change. It is a sweet consolation to believe that the dear friend who has just left us has gone to glory, and will there dwell forever.

The Psalmist, inspired by God to sing of Christ and His work, thought of his own life present, and of that which is to come, and, in a strain of devout praise, exclaims: "Thou shalt

guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." Guidance here by a counsel divine and gracious, and "afterward," as the sequel thereof, reception to glory constituted the theology and the comfort of the sweet singer of Israel. Both were real to him; and such they should be to all who have made their peace with God through Christ. The language has no exclusive pertinency to the Psalmist, but rather belongs to the dialect of all saintship.

Paul, the great expounder of Christianity, crowns the climax of a sublime argument with these words: "And whom He justified, them He also glorified." The context shows that God's foreknowledge, predestination, effectual calling, and justification precede, in the order of things, His act of glorification. This act is the last link in the gracious chain. God has a plan in the salvation of men; and, according to this plan, He finally glorifies in Heaven all whom He calls and justifies on earth. No wonder the apostle exclaimed: "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" Yes, if God be on our side, and has written in Heaven the decree of glory in our favor, who shall reverse that decree?

Referring to those who are "the children of God," by faith in Christ Jesus, the same apostle

thus sketches their immortal future : “ And if children, then heirs ; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” The glory here spoken of is to be realized in and to the Christian when “ the sufferings of this present time ” shall be ended by death ; and with this glory these sufferings are not worthy to be compared. They are merely the inconveniences of the passing moment. If we suffer with and for Christ, we shall be glorified with Him.

“ When Christ, who is our life, shall appear,” says the apostle to the Colossians, “ then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.” Peter speaks of himself as “ an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.” He expected to go to Heaven at death, and there share in the glory of that blessed state. The eye of thought and hope was fixed upon the glory of the spirit world.

There is a passage, in Paul’s Second Epistle to the Corinthians, which sets forth this glory in the strongest manner that lies within the possibilities of language. These are the words : “ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and



eternal weight of glory." The contrasts here drawn are most impressive. Here the Christian has affliction ; but in Heaven he has glory ; and the affliction here contributes to secure that glory. While the affliction here is *light*, the glory is a *weight* of glory ; and while the affliction is but for a moment, the glory is not only far more exceeding, but also eternal. The two are contrasted at every point. Glory in kind that, in degree, is "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," is surely glory on a vast scale. No state for humanity can be higher than this, and no language stronger than that of Paul in describing it.

These testimonies of God's Word are radiant with light ; and, whether we can dissolve the light into its primitive colors or not, let piety take down its harp and swell the strain of joy. Let God be praised for such a picture of what awaits Christian saintship after death. The Christian dead is a glorified spirit, lives in a glorious world, and is in a glorious state.

Dry up those tears, ye weepers over the pious dead ! They have gone to glory. Dismiss those timidities, ye trembling saints who fear to die ! Death will enthrone you in glory. Glory is the word that God uses to lift your hopes and inspire your zeal. He has guaranteed to you "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," and will make the guaranty good when He calls

you to your home in the skies. The reality will certainly not be exceeded by the verbal picture. What God says on this subject, as on every other, is not intended to mislead or disappoint our hopes. Our wisdom is to let the thing said have its fullest force, upon the authority of Him who says it. Doing this, we shall here luxuriate in the sweet anticipation which it authenticates and justifies.

It is, doubtless, true that we cannot on earth perfectly understand this glory, and should not undertake the venturesome task. We can, for all practical purposes, well afford to wait till death shall make us wiser. We do not need to know more than we now do, in order to see that Heaven is desirable beyond all comparison, and that it is alike our imperative duty and highest interest to seek admission into that world. The Bible, however, has not limited us to merely the general idea of glory expanded into its highest possible meaning. It adds other ideas; and these, to some extent at least, explain the *nature* of this glory.

It is certainly a Biblical idea that the Christian in Heaven will be a much wiser being than he was or could be while in the body and on earth. He will know more there than he did here. "For now," says the apostle, "we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know

even as also I am known." He selects the knowledge of the mere child, as compared with that of the full-grown and mature man, for the purpose of illustrating the difference between our knowledge here and that which we shall have in Heaven. We shall doubtless be progressively wiser by the continual growth of knowledge during all the ages of our immortal history, and richer and larger themes will occupy and interest our thoughts. Faith in its present form will give place to celestial vision. God and His great kingdom of nature, as well as of law and grace, will be unfolded to us as they are not and cannot be on earth. The things that, perchance, perplex us here, will be simple hereafter.

Be patient, then, ye anxious, inquiring children of faith on earth, who wish to know more. Content yourselves for the present with the present measure of attainable knowledge. Read the Bible thoughtfully, believe what it says, and make good use of the information given. Your desire for more knowledge will, ere long, be gratified. You will soon have the privilege of dying, and then the sunlight of Heaven will burst upon you. Celestial glories will, then, by celestial experience, come into the field of celestial vision. Death will disenthral you from the confinement and limitations of the body of

flesh and blood, and crown you with the glory of knowledge.

It is equally a Biblical idea that the Christian will be *sinlessly perfect* in Heaven. He is not so here, even in his best moral state. Often saddened with the consciousness of sin, he as often has occasion to make the Publican's prayer, and to say with Paul: "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He does not always do what he approves, and sometimes does what he disapproves; and, in either event, he condemns himself. His present life is a contest between conflicting principles and influences.

It will not be so in Heaven. Christians, once admitted to that world, are described as "the spirits of just men made perfect." They are presented as "faultless" before the presence of the divine glory, with exceeding joy. Beholding the glory of the Lord, they are changed into the same image from glory to glory. Seeing Christ, and communing with Him, they become like Him in all the perfections of his moral character. Like their Lord—holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners—they form what the Bible calls "a glorious Church," triumphant and celestial, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, as the fitting spouse to grace and honor the Heavenly Bridegroom.

They are, according to the measure of their capacities, perfect in holiness, and so remain forever, leaving all sin behind them when they leave this world.

Moral purity is the highest glory of our nature ; and this glory, perfect in degree, attaches to the Christian in the heavenly world. So the Bible clearly teaches. Oh, blessed glory ! when imperfect holiness shall be crowned by perfect and eternal holiness ! Oh, blessed day ! when sin itself shall die, and saintship obtain the victory, and emerge into the purity celestial !

It is not less a Biblical idea that the Christian, after death, will be *perfectly happy*. Nobody who has read the Bible ever supposed that the miseries which attach to and afflict him here will follow him into Heaven, or that they will be succeeded by new and different causes of misery. The universal idea, as to what the Bible teaches, is that Heaven is the abode of perfect happiness. Nor can there be any doubt as to the correctness of this idea.

The Bible speaks thus of Christians in Heaven : " They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more ; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters ; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." It further says, in another passage :

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying ; neither shall there be any more pain ; for the former things are passed away.” No stronger picture than this can be drawn of Heaven as a happy world ; and with it the whole current of the Bible corresponds. The idea, though worked out in various forms, is always one and the same idea.

Yes, it is true—and God be praised for the truth !—that Christians, when they die, bid a permanent farewell to misery and all its causes, and enter into a state of perfect and eternal happiness, which, doubtless, is progressive with their increasing capacity. Their growth of knowledge and perfect holiness naturally lead to this result. The contrast in this respect, between what they were here and what they are in Heaven—between Lazarus, the beggar, on earth, and Lazarus, the prince, in the skies ; between the martyr roasting at the stake and the same martyr singing in Heaven—yes, this contrast may well reconcile us to death, and fill us with good cheer as we close our eyes to the things visible and temporal, only to open them to the things invisible and eternal.

A brilliant hope, authenticated by the Word of God, attends us as we step into the stream of death ; and, to a being of man’s capacity for happiness, this hope is worth more than all the

gold of earth, and more than all the honors ever gained or lost in this world. To die and go to the Bible Heaven is, on the score of happiness, to make a profitable change of worlds. There is no bliss here that can for a moment be compared with the bliss to be attained there. There is no sorrow here which the joy of Heaven will not cure.

Other ideas might be added as to the nature of the heavenly glory revealed in the Bible ; yet, a great expansion of knowledge, the attainment of perfect holiness, and the state of perfect happiness—ideas which are not uncertain speculations, but rest directly upon the authority of God's Word, and may, therefore, be accepted with implicit faith—will suffice for the present meditation. They make the heavenly life one of superlative glory. They constitute, in part at least, the charm of that life. We shall see more and know more of Heaven when there ; yet what, with the aid of the Bible, we can here see, makes it attractive beyond the power of words to express.

Reader, have you loved and lost and buried a sainted friend ? If so, you can sympathize with the writer in asking the question, What has become of the loved and the lost ? He hopes that you can also sympathize with him in the consolation and the comfort afforded by the Bible answer to this question. The Bible

has more good news for you on this subject than you are aware of, unless you have, with prolonged attention, turned your ear in the direction whence the news comes. Its eschatology, as to those who die in the Lord, fills the whole firmament of thought with transcendent glory. Its pictures of their future state contain the boldest, the sweetest, and purest imagery of time. The best words in language, and the best objects in nature, are laid under contribution, to give us an idea of their heavenly life.

A stricken and sorrowful heart, weeping over its loss, following in thought its dear departed one, yet sitting in the illuminated gallery of the Bible, will find its griefs, by a mysterious enchantment, passing away, and the sweet calm of hope and joy taking their place. Congratulations addressed to the dead, rather than sorrows rending and wrecking the heart, will become the experience of the soul. How gloriously the Bible lifts and scatters the shades that hang over death! What joy it sends into this world by the needed service! What madness is that which spurns the light, and passes to the grave and to eternity without its comfort!



## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE HEAVENLY SONG.

THE physical organism which produces all the varieties of sound, embraced in the term "song," is one of the marvels of our bodily life. The air we breathe, and, in order to live, must breathe, is by this organism so modified in its passage from the lungs that it becomes articulated speech, or intoned sound, whether articulate or not, assuming either character at the pleasure of the will, or neither at the same pleasure. When thus modified, the air makes an impression upon the ear; and that impression, by a most delicately arranged contrivance, is transmitted to the percipient mind within, and then we have sound, in the form of speech or song, existing as a completed fact.

Who but God could have conceived the idea? Who else could have realized it? He who dispenses with God in accounting for this complicated and wonderful phenomenon, prefers to be blind when it is much easier to see. To refer it to a primitive protoplasm, and leave the question there, is simply to make the protoplasm divine.

The special function of articulated speech is to convey ideas, and of song, to express and awaken emotions. The latter is, hence, the natural language of feeling, particularly those feelings that are pleasant. All persons, when happy, instinctively sing out their joys; and these joys, thus expressed, have a tendency to awaken similar joys in others. The pleasures of life are thus allied with song. It would be a great misfortune to this world if song should ever become one of the lost arts, or if men should lose their capacity to appreciate and feel its charms.

The great artists of song depend upon their tones for their power; and when these tones are, by culture, carried to their highest perfection, then song becomes the most impressive eloquence that can be addressed to the human ear. There is no form of vocalization that can equal song at its purest and best grade. The heart never disputes its fascination, and the sensibilities never fail to yield to its power. Great singers are always great favorites. All classes listen to them with delight.

The human body, in its organism for the production of sound, is the most perfect musical instrument known to man. Those made by human art were suggested by this one, and all of them are inferior to it. No other can equal it in variety or sweetness of tone, and no other

can be indefinitely improved by its own action. No other is directly associated with a conscious intelligence for its own regulation. The inhabiting soul is, in fact, the artist that plays upon this instrument. The cultured human voice, under the direction of this artist, is the prince of all musical power.

It is not at all surprising that, in every age and country, religious sentiment should have found in song one of its most natural modes of expression, and also one of its most powerful means of impression, and, hence, that the two should have been so intimately related in the history of this world. The singing of psalms and hymns as a method of praising God, expressing devout feeling toward Him, thanking Him for His favors, imploring other favors, and making confession unto Him, was, for centuries, the practice of the Jewish Church ; and since the age of Christ and His apostles it has been the practice of the Christian Church, and such it will remain to the end of time. The alliance between religion and song is so natural and so strong that nothing can break the tie that binds them together.

The Bible gives the fullest sanction to this alliance, and does not condemn the accompaniment of instrumental music as an auxiliary power. Paul simply expressed the universal thought of the Bible when he said : " I will

pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also ; I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." In his Epistle to the Ephesians, he writes thus : " Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart unto the Lord." The race will never lose the art of song, and song will never cease to be a power and have a place in the earthly worship of God. The hymn-book and the Bible will live as long as the world stands.

Turning, then, to the Bible, and especially the Book of Revelation, we find that Heaven is there represented to us as a place of song. The inhabitants of that world appear as religious singers. Adoring ascriptions and songs of praise constitute one of the Biblical views of the heavenly life. Sinners redeemed, and angels who never sinned, are united in this service. This is specially true in the visions of Heaven given in the Book of Revelation.

The " four beasts," more properly rendered the " four living creatures," seen and described by John, which, according to the general interpretation of commentators, are taken to be pictorial symbols of the attributes of God, are presented to us as resting neither day nor night, but always saying : " Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to

come.” The four-and-twenty elders sitting round about the throne, clothed in white raiment, and with crowns of gold upon their heads, who are regarded as emblematic of the Church triumphant in Heaven, fell down before Him that sat upon the throne, and cast their crowns of gold before the throne, saying : “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power, for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created.” In the midst of the throne stood a Lamb ; and before this Lamb the four-and-twenty elders fell down and sang a new song, saying : “Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof, for Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us unto God by Thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests.”

The voices of many angels, to the number of “ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands,” join in the song, saying : “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.”

John, at a later stage of the vision, thus describes what he saw and heard : “And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty ;

just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints." The heavenly "harpers, harping with their harps" help to make up the celestial orchestra, adding the symphonies of their music to those of song, and singing, "as it were, a new song before the throne."

Every intelligent reader of the Bible understands that, while John describes things as he saw and heard them, when he "was in the Spirit on the Lord's day," the things themselves are pictorial and symbolic, consisting in a series of supernatural visions. Heavenly songs and heavenly singers form a part of these visions. John heard the songs, and gives the language used. The necessities of the case made the language that of earth, just as all revelations from God in words, in order to be intelligible to man, must be made in human words. These are the only words that we can understand.

There is, however, no difficulty in apprehending the idea conveyed by these symbolic songs. Like the religious song of earth, they are an expression of devout thought and feeling toward God ; and so far as redeemed sinners participate therein, they are the reproduction and continuance in Heaven of what, in kind, exists on earth. Saints and angels in Heaven and saints on earth worship God ; and inasmuch as religious song has such a conspicuous place in the worship of earth, the term "song," with its cognates, is

eminently a fitting one to represent the worship of Heaven. There is no word in use among men better suited to express this idea.

The worship of God by human beings on earth, whatever may be its outward form, consists essentially in believing apprehensions, recognitions, and acknowledgments of God, as made known in His works and His Word, and in those affections of the heart that correspond with His attributes, character, and relations to the children of men. The God thus worshipped on earth is, for essentially the same reasons, and by essentially the same exercises, also worshipped in Heaven. The thoughts and feelings contained in the ascriptions and songs which John heard in Heaven, are, in kind, those of every one who on earth worships God "in spirit and in truth." Understanding, as we do, what the worship of God here is, we can form at least some idea of what it is in Heaven, and consequently of the saint's employment and activity in that world. Saints here have affections toward God which would not be out of place there. The Christian doxology, so often chanted by earthly lips, fits either world.

The worship of Heaven, though essentially similar to that of earth, is, however, of a much higher order, with broader apprehensions and comprehensions, with holier and purer emo-

tions, and with intenser happiness, than that which is possible in this world. It is sinlessly pure, and, so far as it is the worship of redeemed sinners, rendered by faculties greatly expanded beyond their highest earthly range. The saint in Heaven, though not ceasing to be himself by going there, will there rise above himself and beyond himself as he was here. The impediments, limitations, restrictions, and imperfections of flesh and blood do not follow him to the skies.

The soul, upon its entrance into Heaven, becomes more like the angels who stand around the throne, and less like the incarnated pilgrims who domicile in earthly tabernacles, and who, while here, are subjected to the necessity of seeing "through a glass darkly." The glories of Heaven burst upon it, and are there seen and felt as they cannot be here. This view is no mere conjecture or vague speculation. The Bible abundantly authorizes us to think of Heaven as a great advancement upon our present state, and that, too, not only in knowledge, but also in spiritual character. It is in all respects a much more perfect state than that of earth. Paul so thought when he desired to depart and go there, and there be with Christ.

The Christian surely has no reason to regret that he must die, and should not die a thousand deaths in fearing one. It would be a misfortune



to him if his earthly life were immortal. Death, however terrible it may seem in some of its aspects, releases him from the bondage, imperfections, and ills of the present life and puts the song of Heaven on his lips ; and that, too, in more hallowed strains, in sweeter and purer notes, and with richer joys, than were possible here. If the worship of God on earth was his delight, it will be more so in Heaven. If the sentiments of the heavenly song, as disclosed in the Bible, pleased him here, they will please him more hereafter. If his earthly devotions were intoned with this song, Heaven will lift these devotions to a higher grade of sweetness and purity. The training of earth in the sacred art will have its completion and perfection in the sublimer skill of Heaven. The Christian, with such a prospect before him, can well afford to die. The event will work no harm to him. Having a good hope through grace, he is ready for it. Paul was, and so may any saint be.

The question whether, upon retiring from this world, we shall be in this state of readiness or not, depends, as to its answer, upon the moral character with which we thus retire, and which we carry with us into the future life. If our spiritual state here is in harmony with the Bible God, alike in respect to His government of law and the Gospel of His grace, and if the worship and service of that God are here both our pleas-

ure and our choice, then we may safely assume that our names are "written in the Lamb's book of life," and that when this short day shall be ended, we shall unite, with the angels and with "the spirits of just men made perfect," in singing "the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb." There is no danger in the assumption upon such evidence. The assumption may, indeed, become the full assurance of hope without any presumption. He who on earth worships God "in spirit and in truth," will certainly do so in Heaven.

If, on the other hand, one's moral state be out of harmony with the Bible God, and if, in this condition, he leaves this world, then there is absolutely no warrant in the Scriptures for the least hope that he will ever participate in the song of Heaven. Exactly the reverse is the prospect before him. Heaven is no place for the blasphemer, or the gross sensualist, or for one who denies the existence of God, or rejects the Gospel of Christ, or for one whose sensibilities are in harmony with the revelry, the drunkenness and profanity of a grog-shop, rather than with the services of the Christian sanctuary. Such a man is not spiritually qualified for the heavenly life, and would not be happy in Heaven if he were there. His moral condition places him in the category of those who are "without God and without hope in the

world." He has no taste for the heavenly song here, and will have no fitness to sing it hereafter. To assume that death will give him this fitness is to make an assumption which the Bible does not authorize, and which that Book most explicitly contradicts.

The plain doctrine of the Bible is that what we are to be and to do in eternity shall be determined, not by the process of dying and not by the mere change of worlds, but by the moral character that we form in this life, and with which we leave this world and pass into the next life. The Word of God pours a flood of light on this point, alike in respect to the good and the bad.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE HEAVENLY REST.

THE facts of our experience in this life abundantly qualify us to understand the meaning of the term "rest." All languages have some word or words for the idea conveyed by it. Rest is nature's antidote and remedy for the physical exhaustion consequent upon the long-continued activity of the body. A solid luxury is that which greets limbs worn and tired, when rest lays its soothing hand upon them, and the sweet oblivion of "balmy sleep" gently cures their pains. One who, for weeks, perhaps months, has felt the pangs of martyrdom from disease, passing sleepless nights and suffering days, severely taxed in his patience, often disappointed in his hopes, and always wretched in his discomforts, needs no prophet to teach him the meaning and charm of this term. What he intensely desires is the relief afforded by rest.

Extreme old age is the period of feebleness and decay, when almost nothing but rest is left for us in this world. The body suffers from a

disease that no medicine can cure, and carries within it a damage that no change of climate can repair. It must rest. There is no other relief for it on earth. Happy is the man who accepts his situation with composure, and rests and waits, and waits and rests, until he hears the final summons. Gray hairs, thus adorned, are beautiful. We admire and honor them at the same time. In that withered and faded form we see the domicile of an angel. The tenant within asserts his superiority over the body, and heralds his own glory, as the body sinks back to its native dust.

The relations of rest, so far from being purely physical, are just as real in respect to our mental nature, and much more important. There are discomforts of the soul, as well as those of the body, which have their seat and source in the soul itself, and which may fill the air with frightful spectres, and cast dark and gloomy shadows over the whole scene of life. The thoughts of the mind produce these discomforts. They sadden and afflict the heart, and pierce the sensibilities with sharp arrows. Many a man is haunted, to the extremest anguish, by his appalling thoughts. What he wants, and finds it difficult, if not impossible, to gain, is the relief which the subsidence of these thoughts, and the substitution of other and different thoughts, would bring to his soul.

If the pangs which one feels be the natural and proper result of thoughtfulness, then he may be sure that there is some serious error in his practical life ; and what he should do is, not to dismiss the thinking because it is unpleasant, but to reform and reconstruct that life. Rest to the soul gained by mere dissipation of thought, is always purchased at a very dear price. The mental disturbance will return, probably with increased intensity, whenever serious and sober thinking returns ; and return it will, sooner or later—if not in this world, then in the next. The man whose thoughts give him no peace, and will not permit anything else to make him happy, is in a sad predicament for himself. He knows the value of a restful and cheerful mind by the want of it.

The Bible, while not inventing the term “rest,” as an expression of our earthly experience, or originating the ideas conveyed by it, finds a place and a use for the term, as a fitting word to set before us the *reliefs* secured to the believer in Christ while on earth and in the journey of life, and the far greater *reliefs* that await him when the journey shall have been finished, and he shall have been admitted into the heavenly world. The Bible, in thus using this term, lifts it from relations purely temporal into the higher realm of things spiritual and eternal. It avails itself of our experience in

time to give us one of its visions of the heavenly life. That experience qualifies us to apprehend and appreciate the meaning of the term "rest," when so used.

"Return unto thy rest, oh my soul!" said the Psalmist, when the densest shadows had spread their mantle over him. "The sorrows of death compassed" him, and "the pains of Hell gat hold upon" him. He "found trouble and sorrow." Such is his own description of himself. Then it was that he called upon "the name of the Lord," and the Lord delivered his soul from death, his eyes from tears, and his feet from falling. David, in a great emergency, went to God as the rest of his soul, and obtained what he needed. The raging sea became a calm; the clouds were lifted; the sunlight of a cheerful and happy day burst in upon him, and he sat serenely on the deck of life, with songs of gratitude and praise on his lips. The term "rest" fitted the facts of his experience.

Millions of others, having a similar experience, have used the term in like relations. Humanity wants God for its rest as really as the body wants food for its nourishment. Thought, if it stops short of God, will stop too soon for its own comfort. Thought, without God to guide it, is foundered on a shoreless sea.

Our Saviour—Himself, in His human nature,

a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin—looked out upon this suffering and sorrowing world, and addressed to it the tenderest salutation that ever greeted any human ear. These are His words: “Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” The persons here specially characterized are those who “labor and are heavy laden;” and, while this description may apply to some with greater force than to others, it, nevertheless, applies to a large class, and more or less to all classes. Life’s burdens in some form press on all shoulders, and life’s trials in some form come to all hearts. No one wholly escapes them. If in the outset we expect to do so, experience will teach us the mistake. If life is not always shadow, it certainly is not always sunshine. There is a vast experience among men lodged and living in the bosom of those who “labor and are heavy laden.” The words of Christ imply such a reality, and relate to it.

What the Son of God proposes to us is that we should come to Him for the relief and the rest we need, as we pursue our pilgrimage to the grave, connected with the assurance that, if we do so, we shall find rest unto our souls, and



also with the promise that He Himself will give that rest. He may not remove all our trials, cancel all our sufferings, and perfectly heal all our wounds ; but He will give us the soul-rest—the calm and quiet frame of mind that patiently bears earth's ills, and has no fear for eternity. He will be the soul's great physician now, while it is in the body and in the battle-struggle of life. In Him we may find that sweet repose of thought which only those understand who have put the promise to the test of actual trial.

Such persons know by experience what the promise means, and what Christ does for souls that go to Him for the reliefs they want. He never disappointed a heart that really came to Him, and never turned away a believing penitent that sincerely sought the consolation and comfort of His grace, and He never will. He came into this world to help men, and not to harm them, or betray them. The best friendship, for the purposes of this life, that we can possibly form, is that of Jesus Christ. It is far more important than that of the mightiest potentate who ever sat on an earthly throne. Christ is divine as well as human ; and this makes Him equal to any emergency that may arise in our history. We cannot overtax his resources.

The present rest, important though it is, and

exceedingly helpful as we go through life, is, however, not the final one, and not the eternal rest of the soul. The Bible extends the term to the supreme and perfect rest of Heaven, as well as to our spiritual rest on earth. The latter is only preliminary to the former. We have the one while preparing for the other. However much the present rest may relieve life's burdens, and cheer and happyify its hours, the great and complete relief comes only when we have finished the whole task of earth, and actually made our entrance into the heavenly world. Rest is one of the forms of thought under which the Bible sets before us life in that world.

Thus Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, says with reference to this rest: "There remaineth, therefore, a rest to the people of God." Such was his conclusion based upon an argument contained in the preceding context; and this argument shows that the term "rest," as here used, refers to the heavenly rest, or the heavenly Sabbath of the soul—the final and eternal rest of the spirit world, spoken of as remaining "to the people of God." It is not obsolete, and not confined to the Jews or to the apostolic age, but "remaineth" to God's people as their future portion, in all ages and countries, no matter who they are, when they were born, or where they die. It is enough that they are "the people of God." They will all at last

enter into this heavenly rest. Such is the idea conveyed by this passage.

The Book of Revelation speaks to us in the following precious and soul-cheering words: "And I heard a voice from Heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." Those "die in the Lord" who die as the friends and followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the allegiance of faith and love, whether they yield up their breath as martyrs or otherwise. The sequel is that they at once "rest from their labors," and their works do follow them; and hence they are spoken of as being "blessed." The voice that John heard from Heaven directed him to write blessedness on their side and in their favor.

The term "labors," as here used, is a strong expression for the sufferings which Christians may be called to endure, as well as for the efforts they may make, in the cause of Christ. It embraces both ideas; and when all these "labors" of time, in whatever form, shall be ended, as at death they will be, then comes the period when those who die in the Lord "rest from their labors." Their work on earth being done, they go to enjoy the eternal rest of Heaven. Rest is the word selected to represent their state in that world.

The great apostle to the Gentiles thus rested, when he had finished his course and kept the faith, and when by martyrdom he went to his final reward. His missionary journeys were ended, his last sermon preached, and his last pang felt on earth. He was no longer the victim of human violence, and no longer persecuted by his own countrymen. He rested *from* his labors. What was true of him is true of every Christian when he leaves this world by death. The saints' rest in Heaven awaits all saints. They all have the same title to it.

Paul, in his Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, said to the members of that church: "It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you, and, to you who are troubled, *rest with us*, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." Here, also, the heavenly life is brought to the level of our apprehensive thought in the form of rest; and this rest is spoken of as a recompense to those who had been troubled. God will at last set the matter right by giving rest to His people who in this life have passed through scenes of suffering for His cause. They may be persecuted here, and here

die as martyrs ; but He will see to it that they finally "rest from their labors."

The special phase of the heavenly life indicated by the term "rest," as used in these Scriptures, evidently consists in the *reliefs* which the Christian gains by leaving this world and going to Heaven. Though he does not rest in the sense of sinking into inactivity and torpor, he does rest *from* the "labors" that belong to the life of earth ; and, in this respect, is greatly a gainer by the change of worlds. He goes to a much better world for the comfort and repose of his soul than the one he leaves.

The whole teaching of the Bible proceeds upon the theory that our existence on earth involves trials, difficulties, and dangers ; and experience abundantly confirms this view. Our earthly life is, in this sense, a battle-ground ; and hence we are exhorted to put on the whole armor of God, and fight the good fight of faith, resisting the world, the flesh, and the devil, and winning victories over temptation, whatever may be its form or power. We are to endure hardness as good soldiers. A race is set before us, and a prize at the end thereof, to be won or lost ; and not counting ourselves to have already attained, or to be already perfect, we are to run that race and win that prize, ever pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

There is weariness and toil in the Christian service, and this is to be patiently borne, while we luxuriate in the joys of hope. There is self-denial in this service, and we must practice it, if need be, to the plucking out of right eyes, and the cutting off of right hands. Martyrdom, in a martyr age, must be bravely and cheerfully met. The sufferings, afflictions, and sorrows which God, in His providence, may assign to our lot, must be patiently and submissively endured. We must, in a word, alike in passive submission and active obedience, do the work of life in the day of life.

Human life presents many diversities in its allotments, and there are also in it rich sources of consolation and comfort in the grace of God ; and yet there is in this world no absolute exemption from evil. Earth is not Heaven, and was not intended to be. Jesus, though immaculate in character, was on earth a sufferer, and so much so that He is spoken of as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. The same was true of the apostles and the prophets, and is more or less true of all men. The Gospel, with all its light and hope, leaves a broad margin for faith amid mysteries we cannot explain, for patience in the endurance of ills we cannot prevent, and for the culture of both virtues in a climate that puts them severely to the test. God has appointed the circumstances of our

present probationary life, and we must accept them as we find them. We cannot change them if we would, and we certainly do not know enough to find fault with them. The fact that God has appointed them is sufficient to settle their wisdom, whether we can see it or not.

When, however, the struggle and the battle of time shall be finished, and we shall have actually entered upon our heavenly life, then the reliefs of the latter, as compared with our condition here, will, by a glorious and most impressive contrast, make that life a heavenly rest. The Bible, in respect to those who die in the Lord, teaches us that death will inaugurate a new order of things, and make a broad contrast between what was on earth and what is in Heaven and is to be forever. God will wipe away all tears from their eyes ; there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, nor any more pain ; and in this respect " the former things " will all pass away. The evils of earth will be left behind, and only that carried into eternity which will be a blessing and a comfort. This is the view of Heaven which we gather from the Word of God.

There will hence be no weariness in that world ; no old age there ; no poverty there with its wants ; no sickness there with its discomforts, and no painful bodily conditions there to distress the soul. The numerous forms of injustice

and wrong which do so much to swell the miseries of this life, and all the bad passions which are the sources thereof, will have no existence in Heaven. Courts will not be needed to try and punish the guilty, and protect the innocent. Controversies, founded on conflicting interests, will be out of date. There will be no occasion for self-denial, and nothing to impose a tax on patience. The bereavements and afflictions which lacerate the heart here are unknown there. Earthly mysteries disappear there. Doubts and fears are gone, and hopes are fully realized. Sin is not there to mar the peace and bliss of Heaven. "Rest" is the word chosen by inspiration to characterize the change effected, when the Christian breathes his last on earth, and opens his eyes in the heavenly world. And, considered in the light of our experience in this world, it is an exceedingly good word for this purpose.

The Rev. Dr. Beman, who, for a long series of years, was the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Troy, N. Y., and who, in the days of his ripened and undecayed vigor, was a preacher of great power, lived to an advanced age. The author, having studied theology under his instruction, not only admired him, but was strongly attached to him. Meeting him in Philadelphia toward the close of his life, when he was worn and wasted and enfeebled



by time, and spending an evening with him, he was impressed with the change which time had made in that man of power, as he was in other days. His voice was feeble; his limbs trembled; his form was bent; and upon him were stamped the physical signs that his journey was almost ended. The conversation took such a turn that it was not indelicate to allude to the infirmities which had gradually stolen away his bodily vigor.

The wayworn and venerable man, laying his hand upon his brow, as if in a mood of special thoughtfulness, and pausing for a moment that thought might find its appropriate utterance, thus responded: "Ah, yes, my dear brother, I have a disease upon me that can be cured only by changing the climate of earth for that of Heaven! These infirmities will not follow me to that world!" Beautiful thought, and beautifully expressed!

An affectionate son, standing in the chamber of death, gazed with tearful interest upon the form of his dying father, watching and waiting for the final moment. That moment came; the last breath was drawn; and the son, now laying his hand upon the brow of his dead father, exclaimed: "Father is in Heaven! Father is at rest!"

Ah, what a thought is here! What a change! How sudden! How wonderful! One moment

on earth struggling with death! The next moment in Heaven and at rest! The pilgrim of more than three-quarters of a century at last ending his journey in the twinkling of an eye! Life's work forever done! No more sorrows and no more tears! No more anxious care! No more weariness or pain of the body! No more death, and no more fear of death! Complete and perfect rest in Heaven! How gloriously God illumines the Christian's final hour! What a beautiful sunset is that which is the dawn of Heaven! What a privilege to say farewell to earth in one breath, and in the next to be greeted with the welcome of the skies! "O death, where is thy sting?" Thanks be to God that, through His grace in Christ, death ceases to be the "king of terrors," and becomes simply the transit to eternal rest.

"I *ought* to believe," said a venerable saint, on the day preceding that of his death, then fully sensible that his end was near. After a moment's pause, he changed the form of the utterance, and said: "I *will* believe." Pausing again for thought, he added: "I *do* believe." These expressions, though all relating to faith in Christ, are by no means identical. The first was the utterance of his moral judgment as to what ought to be done. The second stated his purpose. The third declared the reality of faith as then and there existing in his own mind

and heart. It was the consciousness of this fact that enabled him to say, as he did, with the inspired Psalmist : " Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil : for Thou art with me ; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."

It makes a vast difference in our prospects for the future, whether, in leaving this world, we die in the faith of Christ, or die without that faith. In the one case we leave all our miseries and all their sources behind us, and carry with us only the elements of good ; and, in the other case, we leave behind us our earthly resources for happiness, and carry with us only the elements of misery. That was a very cutting rebuke which the Saviour put upon the lips of Abraham in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus : " Remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things ; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."

The rich man, who was " clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day," had all his " good things " before death. He, however, " died and was buried, and in Hell lifted his eyes, being in torment ;" and then came his experience of " evil things," his " good things " not following him into eternity, and " evil things " awaiting him there. The " beggar named Lazarus," who " was laid at

the rich man's gate," full of sores, and sought "the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table," and whose sores "the dogs came and licked," had all his "evil things" before death; and when he died, he left them behind him, and "was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom," and was there greeted by the "good things" that awaited him. Death, though to both the same event, so far as merely leaving this world is concerned, was not the same as to the sequel in the next world. It gave to Lazarus the joys and the rest of Heaven, and to the rich man the woes and the despair of Hell. The respective conditions of these two persons, as set forth by the Son of God, are in most impressive contrast with each other. They were unlike in their conditions on earth, and far more so in the world of spirits. We are not to forget that Christ Himself drew this picture, that He colored every part of it, and that He meant to make the exact picture that He did make.

The lesson taught by this parable is a very plain one. The man who so lives on earth that all his "good things"—all his joys, blessings, and comforts—are and must be here, will, being at death deprived of them all, be a complete bankrupt for eternity. That man has no treasure in Heaven. He is not rich toward God. No "good things" await him in the life to

come. All the tidings from that life are evil. The Bible has not the faintest whisper of hope for him. His "good things," in whatever form they may exist, are limited to this fleeting hour; and when that is gone, they are gone, and then the "evil things" begin.

He, on the other hand, who so lives here as to secure the rest of Heaven hereafter, will, at death, enter upon that rest, and be happy forever, leaving all "evil things" behind him, and enjoying the "good things" with which God crowns the heavenly life. His treasures are laid up in Heaven, and not on the earth; and when he leaves the latter for the former, he finds them there. He may have been poor on earth, as poor even as Lazarus. Be this as it may, he is rich toward God; and this will make him rich for eternity. He has the treasure "that faileth not," "reserved in Heaven" for those who here comply with the conditions of its acquisition.

There is no difficulty in discerning the distinction between these two lives, or in seeing that they are not merely imaginary lives, but are realities in the conduct of men on earth, or in seeing which embodies the true wisdom. They are entirely unlike in the fundamental principle upon which they respectively proceed, and just as unlike in the final result that ensues. Neither can be separated from its result, as or-

dained and established by God, and neither relived and reconstructed when it is finished. If we want the rest of Heaven, we must so live here as to secure it. If we do not, we shall not have it.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE HEAVENLY TREASURE.

OUR Saviour, in His Sermon on the Mount, said to those to whom He was then speaking, and, by the record of His words, now says to the race : “ Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal : but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.”

The two kinds of treasures, here referred to, are the earthly and the temporal, and the heavenly and the future ; and although widely different in their nature and in the method of their acquisition, both are designated by the same term. The phrase “ treasures upon earth,” in the sense intended by the Saviour, embraces all forms of what men usually call property, riches, wealth, worldly possessions, owned and controlled by individual persons, and hence spoken of as private property, in distinction from that which belongs to the general public, and is devoted to purely public uses. He meant property as held and owned by individuals, and

which they seek to acquire for themselves, and use for their own purposes.

Such property, among the Jews, in the time of Christ, consisted in costly and splendid articles of dress, gold, silver, and valuable gems, as well as in houses and lands ; and He, hence, speaks of it as liable to be corrupted or damaged by moth and rust, and also liable to be stolen by thieves.

The direction not to lay up for ourselves such treasures is not to be understood as implying that they have absolutely no value, or that we are to abandon all the industries needful for the supply of our temporal wants, or that there is any inherent and necessary impropriety in the accumulation of worldly property. No such doctrine is involved in the requirements or prohibitions of Christianity. The acquisition of property may be a perfectly legitimate object of desire and pursuit. The moral question depends on the motive, the method, and the use. There is no sin in simply being rich, and no virtue in simply being poor. Idleness is not a virtue, and diligence in business is not a vice, and not inconsistent with being "fervent in spirit." The banker in his counting-room, the merchant in his store, the manufacturer in his factory, and the farmer in tilling the soil may as really serve God, in these avocations, as the minister in his pulpit.



God commands us to work six days in every seven, and has ordained that the race shall live in this world by the sweat of its brow. He meant it to be a world of diversified and mutually helpful industries. These industries are not only necessary to human comfort, but also promotive of virtue, as well as protective against vice. Paul exhorted the Thessalonians to work with their own hands that they might have lack of nothing, and also told the Ephesians to labor with their hands, doing that which is good, that they might "have to give to him that needeth." He was himself a tent-maker, and at Corinth labored with his own hands. The alms-giving and the charities to the poor and needy which the Bible commends, as well as the religious offering of property to the Lord which it both commands and commends, suppose the acquisition of the necessary means by industrial activity.

The great difficulty, however, with the human race in respect to "treasures upon earth," consists in an unreasonable and sinful passion for their acquisition, leading to an all-absorbing and intense worldliness of thought and feeling that excludes God from the mind, corrupts the heart, and makes these treasures the inspiration and practical end of life. Paul tells us that "they that *will* be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful

lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." He adds that "the love of money is the root of all evil." It is to men considered with reference to this attitude of mind—men enamored, bewitched, and utterly misled in their estimate of things by "the love of money"—that Christ specially speaks in what He says about earthly treasures. He reminds them that, to their possessor, they have no lasting permanence, and cannot, therefore, be the supreme good. What one is in his moral character, and not what he owns on earth, is the great question with God, and should be with man.

Our Saviour, in the parable of the rich fool, sets before us the case of a certain rich man whose ground "brought forth plentifully," and who said within himself: "What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?" He thus answered his own question: "This will I do: I will pull down my barns and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." God said to that man: "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" The Saviour adds: "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

Whether such fools die *millionaires* or not, they are sure to be poor toward God and poor for eternity. They are self-doomed by the very terms of their own condition. Misfortune may make them bankrupts, and death certainly will. Well were it for them if they would seasonably consider the question: "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Well were it for them if they had the wisdom to follow the direction of Christ in regard to "treasures upon earth." Well were it for them if they would heed the oft-repeated warnings of the Bible, in respect to the immoderate and sinful passion for worldly wealth. The fundamental principle of their practical lives, unless corrected, means ultimate damnation; and that damnation it will work out with the certainty of fate. They will finally rot in the grave like common paupers, and at last go to their "own place," like all other unrepentant and unbelieving sinners. They are out of harmony with God, and with the great purpose for which they were created and sent into this world. What they call success is simply a stupendous failure; and in due season they will see this fact themselves.

The other direction of Christ relates to what He calls "treasures in Heaven," and is in these words: "But lay up for yourselves treasures

in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." By the term "Heaven," as here used, Christ evidently means the celestial abode of the righteous after death, in contrast with the earth, as our present dwelling-place; and by "treasures" He means whatever constitutes the future and heavenly life, presented under the special form of thought contained in the term itself. If there are "treasures upon earth" which it should not be our supreme business to lay up for ourselves, there are also "treasures in Heaven," and to secure the latter, rather than the former, should be the one great object of our pursuit, while making the journey of life.

The same term, for heavenly things, occurs in the conversation of Christ with the young man who wished to know what he should do to inherit eternal life. And inasmuch as he proposed to merit eternal life by his own good works, Jesus referred him to the commandments of the moral law; and when the young man replied that he had kept all these from his youth up, Jesus further said to him: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven, and come and follow Me." So, also, upon another occasion, the great Teacher said: "Provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the Heavens that faileth not."

We thus see that the term "treasures," so significant in relation to worldly possessions, forms a part of the imagery of the Bible in disclosing to us the heavenly life. Not poverty with its wants, its inconveniences, and often its great discomforts, but wealth with its ease, its advantages, and its rank, is selected for this purpose. Those who are toiling for riches, in anticipation of what they are to gain therefrom, are by the Son of God pointed to the greater riches of Heaven, for the acquisition of which it will be wise to spend their time and strength. These are the true riches, and he who gains them will be rich indeed, however poor he may be in this world's goods. Death will place him in a palace more gorgeous than any ever occupied by earthly royalty. A crown of righteousness will rest upon his head, and celestial embroidery adorn the robe he wears. He will have no wants unsupplied. His rank in Heaven will be that of an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ. He will be admitted into the most select society in the universe. The purest and wisest beings will be his associates and friends. Glory and honor, blessedness and peace, will establish their eternal domicile in his bosom. The spiritual wealth of Heaven will be put under contribution to make him happy. God will endow him with the riches of His grace in His own heavenly kingdom.

The contrast between the two kinds of treasures, as drawn by the Saviour, shows the vast difference between them. Earthly treasures have, to their possessor, no abiding permanence. Moth and rust may corrupt them ; thieves may break through and steal them ; and when death comes he must lose them all. He cannot carry them with him ; and they would be of no value to him, if he could. The heavenly treasures on the other hand, last forever. No moth or rust ever corrupts them, and no thieves ever steal them. They never take to themselves wings and fly away. Revolutions will not endanger them ; fluctuations will not depreciate them ; and use will not exhaust them. Bankruptcies will not scatter them. Absolute certainty and absolute permanence attach to them forever. They are as immortal as the soul itself. Christ speaks of the treasure in Heaven as a treasure "that faileth not." It is the only treasure possible to man that possesses this attribute. All other treasures will at last fail. This never fails.

Great worldly wealth is an acquisition that falls to the lot of comparatively few persons, however ardently the many may seek it ; yet, in the heavenly treasure, we have a kind of wealth in which all may share, securing a good title to it while here, and entering into its actual possession and enjoyment hereafter. Each one may, in life's short day, enrich himself for-

ever. The day, though short, is long enough for this purpose. We *can* lay up for ourselves treasures in Heaven. The Saviour implies this in directing us to do so. The Bible sets before us this stupendous possibility and affirms its truth. Where, then, is the hour, yea, the moment, in which we can afford to act as if it were not true? How can we consent to waste a life fraught with such a magnificent opportunity?

We have but one life to live on earth, and, when spent, we cannot re-live it and correct its mistakes. Every inch of it involves uncertainty as to its continuance. It is, from the cradle to the grave, dotted with the marks of death; and when its last moment will come we do not know. The signals of mortality hang over the path we tread. If we waste this one life, and thereby fail to gain the heavenly treasure, what can ever be a compensation for the awful failure? We surely can find no such compensation in the momentary pleasures of sin. These pleasures, being dependent upon life, will soon be out of date. Their value, at the utmost, is transient. They will desert us at death, and may do so before death. We cannot carry them with us to the world of spirits. He whose practical theory of life is to have what he calls a good time in the selfish and sinful sense, is sure to have a bad time in eternity. The rich man, who lifted up his eyes in Hell, being in

torment, made this discovery. He had his "good things" in this life, and his "evil things" in the next life.

Ah! reader, why not read again what Christ says in regard to the "treasures upon earth" and the "treasures in Heaven"? Why not follow His counsel in respect to both? Why not submit the guidance of your life to the wisdom of the wisest and best being that ever spake to man? Jesus Christ on earth was God manifest in the flesh. In Him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and when he spake God spake by His lips. His wisdom, in being divine, excludes the possibility of error. He knew what was in man, for what man was made, and what is best for man. Having this supreme wisdom, he tells us to lay up for ourselves "treasures in Heaven." His words, while advisory, are also authoritative. We cannot afford to disobey them.

And, as to the manner of compliance with the direction of Christ, so as to make sure of the heavenly treasure, the light of the Bible is as clear as the sun at mid-day. If there are some things in that Book too high and too deep for our comprehension, this is not one of them. God, in His Word, tells us that, in the person and work of Christ, He has provided a full and complete salvation for our world, and that what is required of us, in order to be saved thereby,



is the acceptance of this salvation by repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, proving the same by an earnest, honest, and persistent effort to obey the precepts of the divine Word. This is the whole of it in a single sentence. This will lay up "a treasure in the Heavens that faileth not." More is not demanded, and less will not suffice. Doing this, we need do no more. Failing to do it, whatever else we do or omit, we shall ultimately be found without a title to this treasure. God's way on the subject must be our way.

Millions of men have lived and died in Christian lands, and gone to the spirit-world without any treasure laid up in Heaven, not because they were positive disbelievers in the truth of the Gospel, not because they meant always to disobey this truth, and not because they were never impressed with its great importance to them, but because, as it seemed to them, they never found just the *right* time to make their own personal salvation a matter of immediate, practical, and final action. They always had something else on hand which they deemed it more important to do. On the question of time they were wholly delinquent, and so they died and went to the bar of God. The direction to "seek *first* the kingdom of God and His righteousness" never controlled their action. They acquired the habit of disobedience, and this

habit, as years advanced, settled into a fixed, inveterate, and confirmed posture of mind, and perpetuated itself without resistance and without any effort to change it, and almost without any consciousness of its presence. Life thus fled away until all of it was gone.

One of the saddest illustrations of this persistent delinquency is furnished by the record of an old man, whose trembling limbs and whitened locks point to a speedy fate, and all of whose days have been spent without the slightest effort to lay up for himself a treasure in Heaven. His childhood and youth were thus spent ; his manhood and middle-age were thus spent ; and now there he is, on the very margin of the grave, with, perhaps, three-quarters of a century behind him, with life almost gone, with eternity just before him, and with not the first thing yet done in the way of preparation for Heaven. Death frowns upon him. He has no pleasure in thinking of the past, none in the present, and none in the future. Meditation brings him no joy. Memory and conscience afford him no comfort. He is without the blessing of hope when he most needs it. The disabilities and pains of his body make life a burden to him. The activities of business that once employed his thoughts he can no longer bear. Amusements have ceased to please him. He must, from sheer necessity, lay down the

earthly tasks of life. Soon he will be dead, and he knows it. He cannot deceive himself on this point. The evidence, in his bodily condition, stares him in the face. He sees it, and feels it in every nerve and every muscle.

Alas! for that man, there are no prospects before him that hopefully invite his thoughts to the spirit-world! The Book Divine is no source of comfort to him. He is not sufficiently familiar with it to be comforted by it, and not in a moral condition to receive its comforts, or be entitled to them. The Bible has no pledges and no promises for him. The simple truth is that he has laid up for himself no treasure in Heaven. Many things he has done, but this one thing, never. He may leave millions to his children, yet there are no millions for him in the skies. His whole record on earth is wrong—fundamentally and awfully wrong. His is a godless and graceless old age, unblest with the joys and hopes of the Christian life. And there he is at last, in his feebleness and decay, near the end of a wasted and misspent existence on earth—a sore affliction to himself and a solemn warning to every passer-by. Who will envy him his lot? Who should imitate his example?

Behold the contrast between that man and Paul “the aged,” and read the lesson taught by both. The latter had the wisdom to lay up

for himself "treasures in Heaven." He heard the call of Jesus, and not being "disobedient to the heavenly vision," said: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Receiving the answer, he spent his ensuing days in the service of the Saviour; and when the shadows of life's evening were gathering over him, and death by martyrdom was in immediate prospect, he said, in his letter to Timothy, his friend and fellow-laborer: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. 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 also that love His appearing."

The apostle's memory of the past, his consciousness of the present, and his hope for the future made him a victor over death. He was not afraid to die. The sequel after death awakened no terror in his bosom. He had much to gain, and nothing to lose, by the change of worlds. Which, then, is the wiser life to live—that of Paul, the servant and the preacher of Christ, who laid up for himself "a treasure in the Heavens that faileth not," and who by dying entered into the actual possession of that treasure, or that of the godless sinner who concerns himself only with "treasures upon

earth," and lays up no "treasures in Heaven"?  
Which will, in the end, seem the better life?  
Which will we be glad to have lived when we  
can live no longer?

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE HEAVENLY LIKENESS.

HUMAN knowledge, whether that of the individual or the race, in respect to the present life, and the world in which we conduct that life, even when carried to its highest possible degree, is knowledge only in part, and that, too, far the smaller part. The unknown everywhere environs the known. Impassable barriers arrest our inquiry, and compel us to pause. We cannot exceed the prescribed range of our faculties. Wonderful as these faculties are in some respects, and marvellous as may be their growth from infancy to mature manhood, they are, nevertheless, subject to limitations that necessarily confine them within a comparatively narrow compass. The man of largest knowledge is most sensibly impressed with this fact, and least likely to be puffed up with vain conceits.

A similar fact confronts us when, even with all the light afforded by the Bible, we turn our thoughts to the great problems that relate to a future life, and attempt to think of ourselves as we may or will be after death, and in another

and a different sphere. The unknown here becomes a still denser cloud. The limitations of knowledge here are still more restrictive and stringent. We cannot project our experience into the future, and can get no light from those who have experience. The dead never speak to us from the other side. Limited as we are in respect to the present world, we are much more familiar with it than with the future that lies beyond death. We actually know more of the one than we can possibly know of the other. The future beyond death is necessarily an object of faith, and not at all a matter of our present experience and observation.

The great questions in regard to this future—those of deepest practical interest to the soul—are these: Will we exist at all after the seeming destruction of death? If so, how long and where will we exist, and what will we be and do? Will we be happy or miserable? Is there any relation between the life that now is and that which is to come, so that what we are in the latter, as to the question of happiness or misery, depends upon our moral conduct in the former? These are questions of supreme importance to every man. They have occupied human thought ever since the world began, and will do so to the end of time. We cannot escape the necessity of asking them, and cannot suppress the desire to have them answered. No

amount of thoughtlessness can always keep them out of sight, and no amount of thoughtfulness can fully gratify human desire in regard to them. Our best thoughts leave us where we must be content to "see through a glass darkly," and "know only in part." God has so appointed, and this appointment we must accept. Why we are thus limited in respect to a matter in which we have such a vast interest, we do not know. The fact we know.

John, the Christian apostle, taught by the inspiration of God, and writing to Christians, tells them that their present state is not one of *total* ignorance of the great future that awaits them after death, and also that it is not one of *perfect* knowledge. Some things they know, and some things they do not know; and, hence, knowledge in some respects, and ignorance in others, characterize this state. These are the words of the inspired penman upon this point: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God: and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." These words will be the guide of our present meditation.

The *first* statement sets forth a present fact in regard to the Christian, coming within the limits of the known, and, as an antecedent, having a most important bearing upon what he will



be in the life to come. The apostle says : " Beloved, now are we the sons of God." This is the present fact, real in this world ; and, as such, we know it.

The phrase " sons of God," in the sense here intended, does not apply to Christians regarded simply as the creatures of God, but rather relates to that sonship by gracious adoption provided for in the Gospel, through which men as sinners become " the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." The same apostle, referring to Christ, says in another connection : " But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." This term " power" means right, rank, station, or privilege ; and this right or rank is spoken of as being the gift of Christ to those who receive Him and believe on His name.

Sonship, in this sense, not being that of creation, which is common to the race, but that of grace through Christ, while limited to believers, applies to the whole class of believers in all ages and countries with equal truth, and without any distinction founded on their antecedent history. All who receive Christ and believe on His name, at once become the sons of God in the sense intended by the apostle. Their alienage as sinners is ended, and they acquire the spiritual relation of sonship, the moment

that faith in Christ is established in their hearts. This faith and this sonship always go together, the latter as the invariable sequel of the former ; and, hence, if we have the faith, and can say that we know whom we have believed, we may with equal confidence say that we are the sons of God.

The truth, as disclosed in the Bible, is that God holds relations to the Christian, and the Christian holds relations to Him, which, in the absence of faith in Christ, do not exist, and always do exist in the presence of such faith. God enters into a formal covenant with him, constitutes him an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ, and pledges His power, providence, and grace for his final salvation. This covenant, with all its gracious contents, is clearly revealed in the Bible, and is, therefore, to be accepted as a fact and trusted on the basis of its divine authority. The Christian may safely open his mind and heart to all the comfort and hope properly derivable therefrom. What he is to do is to believe on Christ, and then believe in a divinely established sonship through Him, as the sequel of his faith, with a resulting heirship that will never fail.

This sonship, being a matter of revelation, is not among the things that we do not know, but rather among the things that we do know, and that God intended that we should know while

we sojourn in the flesh. It is not something that only death can make real. It is real now in respect to every believer. "Now are we the sons of God," says the apostle. Being believers in Christ, this is our rank and *status* on earth, and, hence, we may now say, "Abba, Father," not waiting till we get to Heaven before we thus address God. He is now our Father in the sense that means salvation, and we are His children by gracious adoption.

This relation existing between us and God, we have nothing to fear from His power. He may chasten us "for our profit," and the chastening may not for the present be "joyous, but grievous;" but it will in the end yield "the peaceable fruit of righteousness," and be among the "all things" that "work together for good to them that love God." God understands how to adjust His providence to the salvation of His own children, and how by His own power to keep them "through faith unto salvation."

The *second* statement of the apostle is that, being now the sons of God, "it doth not yet appear what we shall be." The evident meaning is that this does not *fully* appear in the present life, and that so far as it does not appear, we are uninformed as to what "we shall be." That we are not wholly ignorant upon this point is shown by the words which the apostle immediately adds: "But we know that

when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

The idea conveyed is that the *whole* of the Christian's future is not made known in this world. Perhaps it could not be, in consistency with the present limitation of our faculties. Be this as it may, God has not attempted to give us the whole idea. He informs us that, however transporting may be the revealed description of Heaven, the reality goes beyond the description, and that eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard, and that it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him. They go beyond all that is said in the Bible, and beyond the utmost possibilities of present human thought.

We must, hence, for the present, content ourselves with partial knowledge, and wait for death to put us on the supreme mount of vision, and there make us wiser. Then we shall see as we are seen and know as we are known. Then the childhood of our mental existence will ripen into celestial manhood. The darkness of our present ignorance will then pass away, and the reality dawn upon us with the brightness of a noon-day sun. We shall then know more than the Bible reveals, and know what Heaven is by a blessed experience. The sons of God will have much to learn when they get there.

Multitudes of questions which saintship on earth, however learned, cannot answer on earth, because God has not seen fit to answer them, and which may here somewhat embarrass thought, will in Heaven cease to be perplexities. Doubtless, one of the elements of bliss in the heavenly life will be its solution of problems unsolved in time. New things—new to us—will there arrest, feed and bless our thoughts. We shall see God as we did not here, and see the universe as no earthly astronomer ever saw it. Our vision will be broader, rise higher, and go deeper, than was possible on earth. We shall understand the Gospel of our salvation better than we ever did here. Paul now knows more than when he wrote and preached as an apostle on earth. Yes, “it doth not yet” fully “appear what we shall be;” and it is not our misfortune that it is so. Enough appears to make Heaven exceedingly attractive, and make Christian saintship on earth the highest possible wisdom.

The *third* statement of the apostle is in these words: “But we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” Present knowledge of the matters involved in this statement is here affirmed. Although “it doth not yet” fully “appear what we shall be,” we, nevertheless, now “know that when He shall appear we shall be

like Him." Christ is evidently the person referred to as appearing; and this Christ is the central figure in a group of ideas which now come within the circle of Christian knowledge.

Christ—once on earth as the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and at the same time God manifest in the flesh—having finished the work which He came here to do, ascended into Heaven in His "glorious body," and thereafter made Heaven His special dwelling-place. The apostles witnessed the ascension, and were told by two angels, who appeared to them as men, that "this same Jesus," who had been thus taken up from them into Heaven, would come again in like manner as they had seen Him go into Heaven. They never forgot the ascension of Christ, or the information given by the angels in respect to His return to this world. They often, in their preaching and writings, referred to the Second Coming or appearance of Christ. This was one of their familiar, and, indeed, ever-abiding ideas, shining through their whole ministry, whether by word or pen.

Accordingly, John informs us that "when He [Christ] shall appear" the sons of God will see Him as He is, and be like Him. He speaks of the vision and the likeness as matters of present knowledge, implies that the vision will contribute to the likeness, and also refers to this likeness, as the means of now knowing, at least

to some extent, what will be the heavenly life of the sons of God. They will, in that life, be like Christ ; and, in this respect, he is a manifestation of what they will be.

The apostle plainly does not mean that the sons of God will be like Christ in all respects. Though heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, and, as such, participant in the honors and glories of Heaven, they will not be divine, and will not receive the worship of Heaven. They will not sustain Christ's relation to the redemption of sinners, and will not do the work of Christ in Heaven as the "High Priest of our profession." They will not divide with Him any of His royal and priestly functions as the Mediator between God and men.

There are, however, two respects in which the sons of God will be like their divine Saviour ; and, by studying Him and them with reference to this likeness, may now form some conception of their heavenly life.

The *first* of these resemblances is that of moral character. The character of Christ on earth was, and in Heaven is, that of sinless perfection. The Bible summarizes it by saying that He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the Heavens." The record of His life, as given by the evangelists, corresponds with this statement. No such character, either before or since, was

ever presented in human form. No history describes its parallel, and no critic ever saw a just occasion to find fault with it. All its parts are in harmony, without disproportion, defect, or excess, anywhere or in anything. He could challenge the world to convict Him of sin. Though tempted in all points like as we are, He was, nevertheless, without sin. He never shed a penitential tear, never felt the pang of conscious guilt, never made a confession or an apology, and never asked God or man to forgive Him. The publican's prayer would not fit His lips. He wept over the sins of others, never over His own. The character of Christ is the only perfect character ever lived in this world.

This character, moreover, is set before us in such relations and forms of action and suffering, and under such conditions, that, while without parallel in any other character of earth, it appears to human thought as a reality, and not a mere invention of poetic fancy, and is not above our apprehension. It is a character blended with facts, with acts done, with sufferings felt, and with words spoken ; and all these facts are cast in a human mould, which makes them both apprehensible and appreciable by human beings. We can understand the character of Christ in the sense that we can see what it is, and admire its supreme excellence. The



world in every age has understood it. Caviling infidelity has felt and confessed its power ; and no one, be he saint or sinner, philosopher or peasant, ever studied the facts as they appear in the Gospel narrative, without seeing the faultless moral beauty of this most wonderful person. One will be impressed with this beauty at sight, and the longer he looks the more he will see to admire.

Reading the narrative, with a thoughtful consideration of what it discloses, we have Christ set before us in His earthly circumstances, in His relation to God and man, in His most retired intercourse with His disciples, in His contact with the people at large, in His treatment of revilers and enemies, in His sympathy with the poor and the suffering, in His use of miraculous powers, in the sweetness and purity as well as the wisdom of His teaching, in the total absence of all the signs of base passion, in the simplicity and gentleness of His whole bearing, in His patience toward others, in the Garden of Gethsemane, in the presence of the Sanhedrim, before Pilate and Herod, and finally on the cross of Calvary ; and wherever we see Him, and in whatever forms of action or suffering, we see one and the same character, always equal to itself, never divergent to the breadth of a hair from its own perfection, and never exhibiting anything over which a generous criticism

needs to cast the mantle of charity. We see in Him nothing to regret, and nothing that does not exhale the perfume of His own perfect excellence. We see in Him no moral mistake of any kind. His ethical and spiritual maxims are not more perfect than His personal character ; and, in this respect, what He preached He practised, and fully illustrated by His own life.

The sons of God, being here renewed in the spirit and temper of their minds, and having what Paul calls " the spirit of Christ," as one of the marks of their sonship, will, when transferred to Heaven, leave all sin behind them, and assume the beautiful image of the Saviour, who redeemed them with His own precious blood ; and, in this respect, they will be like Him, being " changed into the same image ;" and from this exalted moral state they will never lapse or go astray. Christ-like purity, absolute and perfect, will be their spiritual condition forever. The defects which marked them here, even in their best state, will not follow them to the skies. Their likeness to Christ, as a fact now known, pours a flood of light upon their heavenly life. If we can form a conception of the character of Christ, as we certainly can, then we can see what, as to their character, they will be in Heaven. In seeing the former we see a model of the latter.

Heaven, as disclosed to us by this likeness,

cannot be otherwise than a state of supreme blessedness. There are no joys that can for a moment be compared with those that spring from moral purity. These are the highest possible joys. The character of God and the constitution of human nature make perfect moral purity a living fountain of peace. Such purity is peace with God, and with His government of both law and providence. It is the peace of God that "passeth all understanding." It is peace with one's self in all the operations and experiences of the mind and heart. It solves the problem of happiness. Holiness, like unto the perfect holiness of Christ, is the white robe of saintship in Heaven; and this is peace, unmarred by sin, and as immortal as the soul itself.

The *second* form of this likeness relates to the bodies which the sons of God will inhabit after the resurrection. Whatever may be true of them between death and the resurrection, they will, after the latter event, dwell in Heaven in material bodies. Christ Himself rose from the dead on the third day, and, after forty days, ascended into Heaven in the body which He had on earth. The Bible declares that when He shall come the second time, and all the holy angels with Him, He will raise the dead and judge the world in righteousness. It assures us that the sons of God will, after the

resurrection, dwell in bodies like the body of Christ in Heaven.

Paul, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, says, with reference to the body of flesh and blood that we have on earth, and the body that we shall have in Heaven, that "as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." The meaning, as the connection shows, is that as our earthly bodies are like the body of "the first man," so our heavenly bodies will be like the body of "the second man," who is "the Lord from Heaven." The same apostle, in his Epistle to the Philippians, says that Christ will, at His coming, "change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." As to the saints living when Christ comes, he says that they "shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." As to the resurrection-bodies of Christians, when compared with the bodies which they had on earth, he gives us the following contrast: "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body."

Except as taught by the Bible, we know nothing in regard to the resurrection, and noth-

ing in regard to what Paul calls the "spiritual body." Being thus taught, we know that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and that thereafter the sons of God will dwell in "spiritual" bodies. We know, by the contrast which the apostle makes, that these bodies will be greatly superior to our present bodies, and also know that they will be fashioned like unto the "glorious body" of Christ in Heaven. Revelation gives us this knowledge in the present world.

The likeness to Christ, affirmed by the apostle, when considered in the light of other Scriptures, is, then, a likeness relating to the moral character of the sons of God in Heaven, and also to the bodies in which they will dwell there after the resurrection. It embraces both of these resemblances between Christ and His redeemed people. We are not left without some means of knowing what the apostle meant when he said that "we shall be like Him," and, hence, not without some means of knowing "what we shall be" after death. Our knowledge of Christ supplies these means of present knowledge.

Deeply as the great future may be shaded and hidden from our view in this life, we are not absolutely excluded from all apprehension of that future. What we are permitted to see irradiates that future with transcendent glory.

A heavenly life in which we shall be like Christ in the beauty and perfection of His moral character, and in the "glorious body" with which He ascended into Heaven, is certainly a life to be greatly desired. The apostles greatly desired it for themselves, and did what they could to awaken a similar desire in others. They thoroughly believed in the reality of Heaven; they had most enrapturing ideas of the Heaven in which they believed; and these ideas they preached wherever they could get a hearing. They pointed out the path to Heaven, and, in season and out of season, besought sinners to tread that path. The theme filled their hearts with the fervor of an irresistible inspiration.

The sainted dead who have gone to the Bible Heaven, and will there dwell forever—some of whom were once our kindred according to the flesh, tenderly loved in life, and as tenderly remembered, though dead—are to be congratulated upon what they have gained by a change of worlds. The loss is ours, not theirs. Their character, in purity and perfection, has become like that of Christ; and such it will remain forever. When the resurrection-morn shall dawn upon the world, their bodies will "be raised incorruptible," and fashioned like unto the "glorious body" of Christ. This we now know upon the authority of the Word of God: Glorious things are, in that Word, revealed in regard

to those who "die in the Lord." Survivors may weep over their loss ; wounded affection may pour forth its tears ; but the dead in Christ are to be congratulated. They have fought life's battle and won the victory, and are safe in Heaven.

Hail ! ye sainted and blessed dead ! Standing upon these shores of time, we look across the stream you have passed, and greet you as denizens of the Paradise of God. Reading the Bible you read, and trusting the promise you trusted, we are waiting to hear the call that summoned you to Heaven. That Heaven is now future to us, and now an object of our faith, as once it was to you. We hope that ere long it will to us be a matter of experience, as it is now to you. Our supreme desire is to follow you as you followed Christ, and with you and Him to dwell in the land of perfect holiness and peace. Our one effort now, henceforth, and onward to our last breath, shall be to gain the prize you have won. May God strengthen us in the effort, and then crown it with victory.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP.

THERE is a passage, in Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, which, as rendered in the English version of the New Testament, reads as follows: "For our conversation is in Heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, 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."

The Greek noun *politeuma*, here translated "conversation," means citizenship, and not oral discourse or general conduct. What the apostle intended to say, and did say, is that "our citizenship is in Heaven." By "Heaven" he meant that glorious abode to which Christ ascended when He left our world, in which He now dwells, from which He will come when He appears on earth the second time, and which is the final and eternal residence of all His people.

The statement as to citizenship, made by the apostle, applies to all Christians considered as a class, and not simply to Paul and the Philip-



pians. What he says is that, though for the present actually resident in this world, their spiritual citizenship is in Heaven. When they go there, as they will at death, they will there appear as heavenly citizens.

Proceeding upon this assumption, the apostle in another passage of the same Epistle says : " Only let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ " The words " let your conversation be," are here used to translate the verb *politeuo*, from which the noun *politeuma* in the passage just cited, is derived. This verb does not mean to conduct a conversation in the sense now attached to this term, but rather to live and act in accordance with the requirements of citizenship. This is what Paul exhorts all Christians to do. Having their citizenship in Heaven, even while resident on earth, they should here act in a manner worthy of the Gospel through which this *status*, with all its honors and blessings, is secured to them. The ideas that relate to citizenship penetrate and color both of these passages.

The implication of the apostle's language is that there is an analogy, between the *status* of citizenship on earth and the facts of the heavenly life, sufficient to make the former an appropriate image or symbol of the latter. This analogy furnishes the basis of four suggestions in regard to Heaven.

The *first* of these suggestions is that Heaven is a place where the citizen-saint, after leaving this world, dwells as really as he ever dwelt on earth. A country, a city, or a place, and an established domicile therein, either actual or prospective, belong essentially to the fact of earthly citizenship, and are so involved in the fact that, without them, such citizenship is not supposable. Citizenship must somewhere have a locality, and that locality is the domicile of the citizen. No one surely can be deemed a citizen of a country in which he does not, never did, and never will, reside.

If, then, it be true that Christians on earth are heavenly citizens, it must also be true that Heaven is a place of residence to which they go at death, and in which they thereafter dwell, as really as earth is such a place, and not simply a spiritual state, without reference to any specific locality. We speak of the country of the earthly citizen as the settled and fixed place of habitation, in which his citizenship exists as a recognized fact; and we may with equal propriety think and speak of Heaven as the country of the heavenly citizen, meaning that it is the place of his abode when he shall have completed the work of this life.

Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, refers to the saints of antiquity as confessing "that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth," as

declaring that they sought "a country," and as desiring "a better country, that is," as he says, "an heavenly" country. He represents the patriarch Abraham as looking "for a city that hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God." "The City of God," "the new Jerusalem," and "the heavenly Jerusalem" are Biblical phrases used by inspired writers to convey the idea of a place to which the righteous are transferred at death, and in which they dwell. The word "Heaven" is the common term of the Bible for this place.

The idea is not one of exact resemblance between an earthly country or city and the heavenly country or city, but that as the former is a place of habitation, so the latter is the place where "the spirits of just men made perfect" have their habitation, and where they dwell as truly as they ever did in this world. This is one of the points of the analogy between the two, and the reason why, with reference to this idea, a term, primarily applicable to the one, may be properly applied to the other. We need not be timid about using the terms "country" and "city" in this sense, and for this purpose. The rhetoric of the Bible is safe on Christian lips, and the ideas naturally conveyed by it equally safe in Christian minds.

It is immaterial whether we call Heaven a world, a globe, a planet, a country, or a city,

provided we employ the term to characterize it as the dwelling-place of the citizen-saint after death. This is one of the Bible ideas of Heaven, whatever term may be used for its expression. The apostle's doctrine of heavenly citizenship implies the idea, and there is no danger that we shall be too literal in construing his language. Remove from Heaven this idea, and regard it simply as a spiritual state, without reference to any place of residence, and the symbol of citizenship would lose one of the fundamental conditions of its appropriateness.

Our mental existence in the present life has a locality in a definite and fixed place of habitation. The mind, which is the basis of our essential and continuous personality, here lives in a body of flesh and blood, and is here localized, and in and through that body dwells upon the earth. We never think of it as it is here, except in connection with its habitation in the body. We give to it a residential locality in the body, and through that body in the present world, just as really as we give such a locality to the body itself. The earth, then, in that part of it which we inhabit, is the place of our present residence, alike in reference to both body and soul; and such it remains up to the time of death. Here our earthly citizenship exists, if at all.

What, then, happens when the Christian

dies? The Bible responds to this question with the assurance that, as to his soul-life, he will exist after death, as really as he did on earth before death, and with the further assurance that he will exist in Heaven as the place of his future and permanent habitation. The Bible locates his existence after death in Heaven as a dwelling-place, just as experience once located it on earth as such a place.

This was Paul's view when he said that "our citizenship is in Heaven," and also when he said: "For we know that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens." He had no doubt as to his residence in the body and on earth before death, and no doubt as to his residence in Heaven after death. He expected to go to the heavenly place at death, to reside there and there be with Christ, and was willing to be absent from the body that he might there be present with the Lord. He raised no curious questions about his residence on earth or his residence in Heaven after death. He took the one on the basis of experience, and the other on the basis of "the revelation of Jesus Christ." We can do no better than to make his thinking our own.

A *second* suggestion of the apostle's symbol is that the inhabitants of Heaven exist as a so-

ciety of co-citizens. Earthly citizenship implies a political society of which each citizen is a member, and in which his citizenship exists. This is an elementary condition, and, as such, suggests a social state in Heaven as involved in heavenly citizenship.

What is thus suggested is apparent upon the face of the Bible. The Heaven of that Book is clearly a community of spirits resident in the same world, and consisting, in part at least, of holy angels, and "the spirits of just men made perfect." These beings do not appear as isolated, and without any relations to each other, but rather as a society, of which each is a member, and in which the members thereof hold intercourse with each other, are reciprocally the objects of mutual affection, and are also joined together in acts of worship and songs of praise, as well as in a common destiny. This society is a perfect one in the moral character of its membership.

We cannot, of course, here understand precisely how the heavenly society is organized, or how intercourse between its members is conducted; and this is a good reason why we should not attempt to solve the problem by any process of mere speculation, and especially why we should not seek to reproduce in Heaven all the social relations that exist on earth. But, in the sense of apprehending and believing the

fact, we can understand that Heaven is a social state, and that the inhabitants thereof are related to each other as members of a common society, and hence do not exist in absolute isolation and non-intercourse. There is no difficulty in the apprehension and acceptance of this idea ; and, as to other ideas not now within our grasp, we can afford to wait until experience shall give us more wisdom.

The apostle, in saying that "our citizenship is in Heaven," clearly implies that the relations, the bonds, the intercourse, and the blessings of a glorious and glorified community of co-citizens, united together in condition and destiny, constitute one of the features of existence in that world. He had most exalted visions of Heaven, and membership in the heavenly society is one of them. Such membership meant something to him, and it should to us. Nothing on earth can be compared with it. No society can here be established that will equal that of Heaven. The wisest and best beings of whom we have any knowledge are there. Christ Himself is there, enthroned as the "King of Kings and Lord of Lords." Absolute purity reigns there. Perfect peace is there.

The imperfections which attach to conduct and character here, and which do so much to mar the joys of our earthly life, are unknown in Heaven. The griefs and woes that belong to

time, not being in their causes transferred to that world, are left behind among "the former things" that have passed away. A perfect social state, alike in himself and in others, awaits the heavenly citizen in the life to come. It is no small matter for one to have such a prospect before him as he passes through this life. It is an immense boon to his thoughts and a great comfort to his heart. It lifts the clouds which so naturally hang over death.

A *third* suggestion of the citizen-symbol is that government exists and operates in Heaven. There can be no earthly citizenship without a political society, and no such society without some form of government for its regulation; and, hence, citizenship and government are allied together, in the sense that the former implies the latter. Citizenship in Heaven, then, suggests the idea of government in that world.

Heaven, under the term "kingdom," is often referred to in the Bible as the place where God's government exists and acts. Our Saviour, on the night of His betrayal, and after the institution of the Lord's Supper, said to His disciples: "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." Paul, in his Second Epistle to Timothy, says: "And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom." So, also, in



his First Epistle to the Corinthians, he says, with reference to our present bodies, that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," and that "the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God." He speaks, in his Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, of them as being "counted worthy of the kingdom of God."

These are examples in which the term "kingdom," with its qualifying terms, is in the Bible used in the sense of Heaven, because God's government exists and operates there. Heaven is, for this reason, spoken of as being God's throne. There is no place in the universe where His government is more real or more operative than in Heaven, or where the blessings thereof are more fully realized. Heaven is a perfect illustration of the divine law of happiness as coincident with the divine law of holiness. The inhabitants thereof, in being sinless, supply the spiritual condition of being perfectly happy under the righteous government of God. They are not less the subjects of this government, because obedient and holy, or because obedience is alike their pleasure and duty. Disobedience would work a forfeiture of their citizenship in Heaven. Such, as we learn from Peter and Jude, was the result in the case of those angels that sinned in Heaven and were cast down to Hell.

The citizenship in Heaven, affirmed by the

apostle, is, then, not one that exists under the authority or by the appointment of angels or men, but is a divinely instituted and divinely recognized citizenship, and as such, a part of the legal and gracious order of God's kingdom in Heaven. He Himself is at its foundation, and that, too, by no appointment but His own, and represents no wisdom but His own. He exercises no delegated powers, and needs no counsel to guide Him. He is alike the head and the source of His own kingdom. His right to rule is in Himself, and that He will exercise the right in the best possible manner is involved in His own attributes.

Citizenship in Heaven, under such auspices, with God for the ruler, and with saints and angels as co-citizens, presents to the eye of thought a transcendent glory. This world may furnish the symbol, but cannot furnish the parallel. The citizen-saint, in dying and passing up into Heaven, makes a good exchange of worlds. He has no occasion to dread his final hour. It is the best hour of his earthly pilgrimage.

The *fourth* and last suggestion of the symbol is that of obligations and duties in Heaven, and also of rights and privileges. A fundamental idea in earthly citizenship is that the citizen owes duties to the body politic of which he is a member, and also that he is invested with

rights and privileges in that body politic. This citizenship, being used as a symbol of the heavenly life, implies similar features in that life.

The citizen duties, in their special form, and in the action required for their proper discharge, may not be, and, doubtless, are not, identical in both worlds ; and yet the great law of duty, as adjusted to existing relations, whatever they may be, must be as real in Heaven as it is upon earth. The Christian does not, by leaving this world and going to Heaven, cease to be a moral being, or to exist in moral relations, and does not pass beyond the domain of law as a rule of action. He will there have much to do, as well as much to enjoy. His existence will not be that of torpid inactivity, with nothing to call forth the exercise of his powers. He must deport himself as a good citizen, and he will do so. The grace on earth that fits him for Heaven will equally fit him for all the duties incident to his existence in that world. These duties will be alike his pleasure, and at least one source of his happiness.

So, also, rights and privileges attach themselves to the *status* of heavenly citizenship. Sinners redeemed and saved by the blood of Christ, are invested with a divine right to be admitted into Heaven, and to dwell there forever, not on the basis of their own merits, but on that of the merciful gratuity of God extend-

ed to them through Christ. This right is as real as if it were a matter of personal merit on their part. God's good pleasure toward them gives them the right ; and what He gives they surely have the right to enjoy. Those whom He justifies, and then glorifies, are in Heaven by His decree and appointment ; and this settles the question of their right to be there. No one will dispute what God thus affirms.

Peter, in his Second Epistle, specifies a list of virtues which he exhorts Christians to practice, and then adds : " If ye do these things, ye shall never fail ; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ." The Book of Revelation says : " Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Such persons are not aliens, but citizens of the kingdom of God in Heaven. They carry with them as they leave this world, the credentials of their admission into the heavenly world, countersigned by the Redeemer of sinners. Their names are " written in the Lamb's Book of Life ;" and this Book, as to the human race, is the registry of Heaven.

Jude tells us that redeemed sinners are presented faultless before the presence of the divine glory with exceeding joy. Though once under

the condemnation of sin, and as such, "the children of wrath," yet, being justified through Christ, and having thus made their peace with God, they have the title to Heaven which Gospel grace gives ; and than this no better title is possible. Gracious adoption makes them the children of God ; and this, under the provisions of the Gospel, makes them heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, entitled to all the privileges and immunities of the heavenly life. It is their privilege, and will be forever, to share in all that makes Heaven glorious and happy, to sing all its melodies and engage in all its services. The "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" is the portion of all saints in Heaven. The inheritance that is "incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven," is the common inheritance and the common blessing of all the "saints in light."

Heaven has no monopoly of privilege granted to some but denied to others. The law of *caste* does not exist there. The contrasts of earthly condition are unknown there. No peasantry is found there, and no royalty, except that vested in the "King of Kings and Lord of Lords." Citizenship there has but one grade, and whether the citizen was on earth in high or low life, white or black, rich or poor, a monarch or a slave, makes no difference with his *status* in

Heaven. It is enough that he was a Christian, a child of God, and an heir of God by grace. This, while securing his admission into Heaven, will settle all questions of rank. Angels will welcome him to their society and fellowship, and the Mediator of the new covenant, recognizing him as a follower and a friend, will place the crown of righteousness on his head. "To him that overcometh," says this Mediator, "will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne."

Such are the suggestions of the analogy between the *status* of earthly citizenship and the heavenly life. A heavenly place, a heavenly society, a heavenly government, and heavenly duties and privileges are, by implication, involved in the word *politeuma* or citizenship, as occurring in Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, and by him used as an earthly symbol of what awaits the Christian after death. The ideas, naturally conveyed by the symbol, give us the conception of Heaven under the form and with the suggestions of heavenly citizenship.

Thus an earthly *status* is used to translate to our thoughts that which is heavenly. Studying the one, we are enabled to form some idea of the other; and a very pleasant study it is to one who, hoping to dwell forever in Heaven, would like here to know all he can about that

Heaven. To go to that world, and there be a citizen of the heavenly society, under the government of God, subject to its laws in all the duties imposed thereby, and by grace entitled to all the privileges and immunities of Heaven, is glorious beyond the power of language to express. Paul calls it "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Strange were it if, upon losing a sainted friend whom we tenderly loved in life, and whom we still love, and in respect to whom we cherish the hope that he has gone to Heaven, we should ask no questions and seek no answers in regard to the Heaven to which we believe that friend has gone. Strange were it if his eternal future was dismissed from thought the moment we ceased to see him. Strange were it if we had no concern about the spirit that has fled from the body, and passed beyond the possibility of any present intercourse. And quite as strange would it be, if, anticipating for ourselves the "eternal life" of Heaven, we felt no interest in what constitutes that life.

All this is too unnatural to be real, especially in view of the fact that the Bible has "brought life and immortality to light," and invites us to study what it says about Heaven. The Christian surely should not decline this study. What he can know upon the authority of God, it should be his effort to know, and not the less so

because his knowledge here must necessarily be imperfect. He will find the attainable knowledge a great comfort to him. It will enrich his hopes, and reconcile him to that event which terminates his connection with the present world. The gloom of death will disappear in the light of what he anticipates after death. His hope, while "an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast," will enter into that which lies "within the veil, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus;" and what he sees in the object of that hope, as disclosed in the Word of God, will make death a happy moment, and immortality an attractive and pleasant theme.

One who believes in the divine authority of the Bible, and who, by diligent and devout study, has illumined his own mind with its vision of Heaven, will be alike grateful for what is revealed, and content with the present limitations of his knowledge, and will, at the same time, spend the days of his earthly pilgrimage in the enjoyment of the highest hope that is possible to man. While an expectant of Heaven, he will have most enrapturing ideas of the Heaven he expects. What he sees in hope will be abundantly sufficient for all the exigencies of the present passing hour. Compared with him, a prince on his throne, without his hope, is simply a pauper.



The Christian who neglects thus to study the Bible, and, as the consequence, has almost no conception of Heaven, certainly not such as the study would give, is more ignorant than he need be, and gravely at fault in the matter of his own comfort. He denies to himself the spiritual luxury of a most fascinating meditation. His failure to see what God meant that he should see, and has given him the means of seeing, is to him a serious loss.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### HEAVENLY RECOGNITION AND REUNION.

CHRISTIANS, knowing each other in this world, and related by the tender ties of affection, have often asked whether, being separated by death, they will know each other and be reunited in Heaven, and, if so, whether they will have the feelings toward each other which they had in time. Special interest is imparted to this inquiry when one of their number is actually smitten with death, and all intercourse with the friend dead is, for the time being, at least, absolutely suspended.

Proceeding simply on the basis of our present experience, we can frame no syllogism, the premises of which are strong enough, or reach far enough, to supply an answer to this question. The question manifestly lies beyond the merely natural range of our present intelligence. If we turn to the Word of God for an answer, we shall not find the point there treated as one involving our duties, or as being of supreme importance to us while making the journey of life. Whoever attempts to elicit a direct and

explicit answer from that Word, will at once see that, as to any such answer, the Bible is studiously silent.

The Sadducees, who did not believe in the doctrine of the resurrection, or in that of the separate existence of the soul after death, or the doctrine of angels, said to the Saviour on one occasion :

“ Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren ; and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother ; likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife shall she be of the seven ? For they all had her.”

This cavilling question assumes that, if the doctrine of the resurrection and a future life be true, substantially the same state of things that exists here will be continued hereafter, and, hence, that husbands and wives here must be such there. The Sadducees meant not only to embarrass the Saviour, but also to show the absurdity of the doctrine which they denied.

The answer of Christ to the question was in these words : “ Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the

resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in Heaven." There was hence no pertinency in the question as to whose wife this woman would be in the resurrection. Husbands and wives as such, and as they were on earth, are not known in the future life; and, if so, the same must be true of parents and children. Christians in Heaven are, in this respect, like the angels of God, between whom no such relations exist; and in this sense they are equal to the angels, being elevated above these circumstances of earth, and living in a manner and a kind of intercourse patterned after the model of angelic existence.

The doctrine of Christ, thus incidentally brought out in answer to a cavil of the Sadducees, settles the question that the family, as such, constituted on the basis of marriage, does not exist in Heaven. There is no occasion for it there, any more than for the commercial pursuits that belong to time. Relations that exist for earthly purposes, and these only, however necessary and appropriate here, and however much they may here minister to human good, have no elements of absolute perpetuity stamped upon them.

It does not, however, follow that, as between those known and related to each other in this life, but here separated by death, there will be

no recognitions or reunions in the life to come. What Jesus said, in reply to the Sadducees, is far from being a rejection of this idea; and that the idea rests upon a reasonable probability appears from the following considerations :

The Bible doctrine of future retribution, according to the deeds done in the body, assumes, as a fixed and permanent fact, and an indispensable condition of the doctrine, that we will exist hereafter as distinct and separate *individuals*, and as essentially the *same* persons that existed in time, recognizing ourselves as the same, and by no means losing our personal *identity* or the knowledge of it, by a change of worlds. Retribution, whether in Heaven or Hell, would not, upon any other supposition, be conceivable. The being, to be rewarded or punished in the next life for what he did here, must be essentially the same being in both lives.

Paul in Heaven is not a new creation, but the identical Paul who once lived on earth, and who there did the things which made up his temporal history. He identifies himself in Heaven as the Paul of time, and sees the connection between the life he there lived and the one he is living in Heaven. The same is true of Peter, of John, and, indeed, of all persons who, from this world, have gone to Heaven.

The same truth applies with equal force to those who have so lived here as to lose their

souls hereafter. The rich man that "in Hell lifted up his eyes, being in torments," is the identical man who on earth "was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day." He did not, in the elements of his personal and individual existence, cease to be himself by dying and passing into the future state. The Bible doctrine of retribution, whether remunerative or punitive, assumes and proves this continuity of individual personality.

So, also, Heaven, as represented in the Bible, is one and the same *place* and state for all and to all who are admitted to the enjoyments and blessings thereof, giving us the idea of a social *community* of redeemed spirits. There is not one Heaven for Paul, another for Peter, another for John, and so on, involving a distinct and separate Heaven for each person who on earth made his peace with God through Christ. Those who are saved are all saved in one and the same Heaven, by the same Saviour, and in possession of essentially the same character. They all sing the same song, and constitute the one "glorious Church" triumphant in the celestial land. They are spoken of as "the general assembly and Church of the first-born which are written in Heaven," as "the spirits of just men made perfect," and as associated with "an innumerable company of angels."

Abraham, the father of the faithful, is in

Heaven, and has been for centuries ; and Lazarus, when he died, was " carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom," which means the society of Abraham. He went where Abraham was, and dwelt with him in the same Heaven. Millions of our race have already gone there ; and as time rolls on, and grace achieves its victory in human hearts, other millions will go there.

The Heaven of the Bible is, in part at least, a *community* of redeemed souls, socially related to each other and to their common Lord, and not a vast aggregate of individuals, isolated and separated from each other. No one ever thought the latter to be the Bible idea of Heaven, or ever failed to see that the former is the view which it presents and always implies.

These redeemed souls that, as individuals, make up, in part, the heavenly community, once lived on earth, were there domiciled in human bodies, there had a history, and there held relations to each other. They held the general relation of belonging to the same race and living in the same world ; and, as to their mental and moral constitution, they had essentially the same nature. They were alike involved in the guilt and peril of sin, and have all alike been saved in the same way. Some of them personally knew each other in time ; and some were related by the ties of the most intimate and endearing friendship. Some of them,

like Abraham, Moses, the prophets and the apostles, had a record of great prominence and publicity in time. All of them were once pilgrims in this world. These are the persons who, having lived on earth as individuals, left the earth by death, and, still retaining their individuality, became members of the society of Heaven. Their earthly career is a reality; their death on earth is a reality, and their translation to the same Heaven is also a reality.

Now, assuming that these redeemed inhabitants of Heaven are intelligent beings, self-cognizant of themselves, as they were here and are there, and cognizant at least to some extent of each other as they were here, and that they have some means of intercourse with each other in Heaven, we have, in the facts of their antecedent existence on earth, and in the faculties with which they are endowed, the basis for the inference that what is meant by recognition and reunion, as these terms are used in reference to the facts of this world, must naturally, if not necessarily, in some form and to some extent, be a part of their experience in the heavenly life. Husbands and wives and parents and children will not in Heaven exist in these special relations; but they will exist there as spirits that, when incarnated on earth, sustained these relations, and in the same had an earthly his-



tory, and, as it would seem, must be cognizant of this fact.

Paul in Heaven has not forgotten the Paul of this life ; and, if not, then he has not forgotten his relation to Timothy, as stated in the Book of Acts, or the two epistles which he wrote to him. Nor has Timothy forgotten himself as he was in time ; and, if not, then he has not forgotten his former relation to Paul. Dwelling in the same Heaven, retaining their mental faculties greatly enlarged, and having some method of intercourse with each other, they cannot meet each other as absolute strangers, without any antecedent acquaintance, and cannot fail to recognize each other in what they were, relatively to each other, while on earth. Neither can fully know himself without being reminded of the other. Their lives were so united here that the one knowledge implies the other knowledge.

What is true as between Paul and Timothy must, for the same reason, be true in essentially parallel cases. Let it be granted that Heaven is a social state, and that the inhabitants thereof have some means of communication with each other, and then the simple continuance, preservation and action of our mental faculties, as we know them to be, are sufficient to secure mutual recognitions in Heaven.

This line of argument—based in part upon

the structure and faculties of our mental nature, in part upon our relations and history in this life, and in part upon premises supplied by the Bible—gives a reasonable credibility to the idea of recognitions and reunions in Heaven, and, hence, to the idea that the separations between Christians, made by death, are not absolutely final. The fact that we cannot here understand the mode of their intercourse in Heaven, either before or after the resurrection, does not adversely affect this credibility. We may be ignorant of the mode while accepting the idea, just as we are ignorant of the manner in which disembodied spirits exist while believing that they do exist.

It is true that we cannot claim for this idea the positive and absolute authority of inspiration, or tell precisely how and to what extent the experience of the heavenly life will be affected by the recognition of those we knew in time and reunion with those from whom we were separated by death. We may, nevertheless, cherish the idea as one of the agreeable and reasonable probabilities of thought. Christians may think of it, not only as a relief to the sad and sorrowful bereavements of time, but as imparting a character to the heavenly life which it would not otherwise possess. The facts in the world from which they came, taken in connection with those of the world to which they

go, being brought to mind in the latter, may furnish the material for social joy and many grateful and pleasant memories.

If it would be pleasant, in a foreign land, to meet a friend whom we had known in other days, why should it not be pleasant for friends on earth to meet and greet each other in Heaven? A vast multitude of human spirits will be there; and to recognize them as such, and ourselves as such, even though we were not personally acquainted with them on earth, may well be a part of our heavenly joy.

Christians here hope and expect that, somehow, heavenly recognition will be a fact in the future life. Their farewells at death and in time are not looked upon as final. They think of Heaven as the world in which they will meet and know each other again. The thought is one of comfort and good cheer to the heart, especially when a dear friend has been snatched away by death; and, in the light of the preceding argument, it rests on a sufficient probability to justify the comfort and good cheer. It is an inference based partly on facts in our mental nature and earthly history, and partly on premises furnished by the Bible.

We are to bear in mind also, that, while some of our affections, as those of kindred and country, are earthly and limited to time, there are affections of the Christian heart that are im-

mortal. The love which Christians have for each other, as such, and for their common Lord, is of this character. Having here loved one another as Christians, they will do so more perfectly in Heaven. If personally acquainted here, they will renew and continue that acquaintance hereafter. Death will not destroy it, or make it any less real there than it was here. The affection which enters into it, and, indeed, forms its vital element, is a part of their Christian character, and will go with them into Heaven, and there exist with greater power and purity than it ever did here. Heaven is the world of perfect love, and is made up in part of loving spirits that knew and loved each other on earth.

The fact that the object of this affection was a friend here—a husband or a wife, a parent or a child—will not make it any less real there. The special relation in time may be gone, but the relation established through Christ, with its corresponding affection, will live and last forever. The affection, being alike real here and in Heaven, will there fix upon the being that was its earthly object, when that being shall form a part of the society of the heavenly world. And thus we may say with the poet :

“Blest be the tie that binds  
Our hearts in Christian love ;  
The fellowship of kindred minds  
Is like to that above.”

Heaven will re-establish, as between "kindred minds," the fellowship which death interrupted, and which seemed to have been lost thereby. It will swell the song of Christian love to a louder and purer strain. This thought, though not essential to salvation, and, as already remarked, not a matter of direct and explicit revelation, is, nevertheless, sufficiently probable to have a place in the earthly chronicle of Christian hope. As friend after friend leaves these shores for Heaven, we there in thought see those whom we loved here; and, though we do not expect ever to resume the relations that were purely earthly, we may, if here bound together by the tie of Christian love, expect to know and love them there. They cannot come back to us, but we shall go to them. Christian old age, stripped by time of nearly all its Christian friendships on earth, may think of more friends in Heaven than it can find here, and may cheer its feebleness and decay with the hope of soon meeting them there.

Those who are gone—now silent, sending back no utterance to us from the skies, never returning to meet us here, yet tenderly cherished in the memory of the living—invite us by this hope to follow them, and, when we shall be where they are, to renew our fellowship with them in a better and happier world. There is a pleasure in this hope, and in the probabilities that

support it, well understood by those who on earth have loved as Christians, and who, as such, have committed their sainted dead to the long repose of the tomb.

Oh, how sad to human thought would death be, if we could think of no future, no circumstances, and no world, in which the dead still survive, and in which we may hope to meet and know them again! This view is equivalent to their annihilation, and enshrouds death with the deep darkness of eternal night. It makes it an event of indescribable awfulness. Not the faintest glimmer of hope would be left. The apostle's exhortation that we should not "sorrow" over "them which are asleep," as those do and must who "have no hope," would have no basis on which to rest. We might build costly monuments over the bodies of the dead, and thus testify alike our griefs and our tender recollections of what they once were; yet these offerings of affection to their memory would point to no future for them, and no future for us, in which any possible relation would exist between us and them. They would be gone to us, utterly and absolutely gone, as really as if they had never been. The farewell of earth would be an eternal farewell.

Rather than accept this view, let us take even the feeblest hint of the reverse, and invest that hint with all the reality and practical signifi-

cance of a demonstrated truth. It were better in this life to cherish and enjoy the pleasing illusion, if illusion it be, than to live and die without it. If the idea be false, one has no interest to be here served by here finding it out. To find it out would intensify the mourner's grief, and rob the heart of a sweet delight. The discovery, while bringing no moral good to the soul, would wreck all hope on a shoreless sea. Meditation upon the dead would be an unmitigated anguish to the living.

Yes! if the idea of a future life, in which the dead and the living shall again know each other, be an illusion, then let no man come to the ear of my soul with the information. I prefer to live and die with the illusion, rather than be horrified with the profitless information. There is present hope and present comfort in the one, and nothing but awfulness and despair in the other. Let me be without the information, while living, if I must purchase it at so dear a price. There is no religious superstition that is not preferable to absolute Nihilism.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.

THE facts connected with the death of a human body, so far as known by observation and experience, do not contain the remotest suggestion that the body dead will ever be restored to life, and again become the domicile of the soul that once dwelt therein. The demolition of the body, as an organized structure, is apparently final. The chief embarrassment of thought, in respect to a future life for the soul, arises from this seeming destruction. It is true that all the effects of death, which we actually observe, are confined to the body, and, hence, that we cannot, by observation, tell what is the result to the soul; and yet, at death, all sensible signs of the soul's existence disappear. Such disappearance is the universal attendant upon death.

The doctrine of a bodily resurrection, as held by the Christian Church, does not, therefore, rest upon reason at all, except as reason may be exercised in ascertaining that it is a doctrine of the Bible, and that this Book is of divine authority. Mere reason never discovered the



doctrine, and, if limited to the facts supplied by nature, would never affirm it.

The Bible doctrine on this subject, though intimately connected with the future life of the soul, is not simply the continuance of that life. It plainly has relations to the *body* in which the soul will live after the resurrection, and, in some sense, to the body in which it did live before death. Both are involved in the resurrection taught in the Bible.

Our Saviour stated the doctrine in these words: "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." Christ, here recognizing the fact that the Jews were in the habit of burying the bodies of the dead in the grave, says that "all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth;" and then, in the case of the good, He defines this to be "the resurrection unto life," and, in the case of the bad, "the resurrection unto damnation." The resurrection of which He speaks has, in both cases, some relation to the body that dies and is buried, since it is only in reference to their bodies that dead men can be said to be in their graves.

The Jews must have so understood the

Saviour; and what He knew they would understand Him to say He meant to say. What He did say commits His authority to the doctrine of a *bodily* resurrection; and although, as taught in this passage and elsewhere in the Scriptures, this doctrine relates alike to "the just and the unjust," yet what the Bible says in regard to it refers mainly to the resurrection of "the just."

The fullest and most complete statement of the Bible doctrine on this subject is found in the fifteenth chapter of Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians. This chapter is devoted exclusively to the resurrection of "the just," and, in the opening verses thereof, the apostle cites the proof of Christ's bodily resurrection, consisting in the testimony of the witnesses, including Paul himself, who saw Christ after He rose from the dead and to whom He identified Himself, by "many infallible proofs," as the Christ that was put to death on the cross. Assuming the fact on the basis of this evidence, the apostle thus reasons therefrom:

"Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. . . . But now is Christ risen from

the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order; Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His Coming."

The resurrection of Christ is here treated, not only as an example of an actual resurrection, and, hence, as a proof of the doctrine, but also as a guaranty of the resurrection of those who are Christ's. There is no question as to whether His was a bodily resurrection, any more than whether His was a bodily death. The fact that His body, though dead, saw no corruption, did not, in Paul's view, make its restoration to life less an instance of resurrection, or less the "first-fruits" of those who sleep. As mortality came through Adam, so all the righteous dead will be made alive through Christ. As He rose from the dead, so will they.

Such is the reasoning of Paul; and this settles the question that those who are Christ's are destined to be the subjects of a bodily resurrection. It was to a bodily death, and restoration to a bodily life, that the apostle referred when speaking of Christ as rising from the dead, and also when he said that "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Nothing can be plainer than

that this is the intended application of his words.

This great and wonderful event, designated in the Bible by the term "resurrection," is, as to the *time* of its occurrence, connected with the Second Coming of Christ. On this point the apostle says : " But every man in his own order ; Christ the first-fruits ; afterward they that are Christ's at His Coming." This " Coming " is evidently the Second Coming of Christ, so frequently referred to in the New Testament, when He will personally appear again in this world, raise the dead, judge mankind, and receive His people unto Himself.

Paul speaks of this period as " the end." " Then," he says, " cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father ; when He shall have put down all rule and authority and power. For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. . . . And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." The Second Coming of Christ, the completion of His mediatorial work, the resurrection of the dead, and the termination of the present mundane system belong to the category of " Last Things," as disclosed in the Bible. The re-

surrection has its place in this group of august events.

Moreover, alike as to the risen dead, and those living when this stupendous miracle shall burst upon the world, the apostle lays down this general proposition: "Now, this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." By "flesh and blood" he means our animal bodies, organized and fitted to this world, but not to the heavenly world. These corruptible bodies, in their present condition, "cannot inherit the kingdom of God." By "the kingdom of God," as here used, the apostle means Heaven, appropriately called God's kingdom because He reigns there in "undivided and perfect glory forever." Our bodies of "flesh and blood" must, therefore, be changed before they can go there. "Corruption," such as belongs to them, cannot, without a change, "inherit incorruption," such as belongs to the bodies produced by the resurrection. This is alike true of those dead and those living when Christ shall come the second time.

And as to both classes—the dead and the living—considered with reference to this change, the apostle proceeds to say: "Behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep [die], but we [Christians then living] shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an

eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we [Christians then living] shall be changed." The apostle uses the pronoun "we," meaning thereby to designate Christians, as a class, living when Christ shall come to raise the dead. What he says is that the dead will "be raised incorruptible," and that these Christians will be "changed," and, in their bodies, fitted to the heavenly world without death and the resurrection. Thus all the difficulty, in respect to both, growing out of the fact that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," will be effectually removed. Both alike will have bodies adapted to Heaven.

Paul calls this "a mystery," because unknown to natural reason, and because, even when known by revelation, not fully within the comprehension of reason. We can apprehend the facts which he states, and believe them; yet they involve mysteries which we cannot solve. We must hence content ourselves with the facts, rather than attempt to explain them.

The apostle completes his statement of the doctrine of the resurrection, as found in the fifteenth chapter of his First Epistle to the Corinthians, in the following triumphant words:

"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on in-

corruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

The resurrection, with its attendant facts, will, in the conception of this inspired writer, cancel and eternally abrogate the apparent victory of death and the grave. Death will then be swallowed up in victory. The dead will hear the voice of Christ "at His Coming;" and as He rose from the dead, so will they be "raised incorruptible," and, in their bodies, be fitted to dwell in Heaven. Christians, then living, will "be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," and, also, in their bodies, be fitted to the heavenly world. The "corruptible," in respect to both, will "put on incorruption," and "the mortal" will "put on immortality."

What a prospect, in these marvellous changes, and in this great victory, is presented to the eye of Christian thought! We need not won-

der that Paul, who thoroughly believed in his own teaching, should exultingly exclaim : " O death ! where is thy sting ? O grave ! where is thy victory ? " The resurrection, as he saw it, and as he presents it, fills the Christian's future with transcendent glory.

The same apostle, seeking to minister comfort to Christians who were sorrowing over their brethren dead, said to them, in his First Epistle to the Thessalonians :

" But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the Word of the Lord, that we [Christians then living] which are alive and remain unto the Coming of the Lord, shall not prevent [precede] them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God : and the dead in Christ shall rise first : Then we [Christians then living] which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air : and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

Here are essentially the same thoughts that



we find in the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. Paul regarded the words containing them as being adapted to alleviate the sorrows of bereavement, and for this purpose used them. He reminds the Thessalonians of the fact that Christ is coming back to this world personally, in great glory, and with mighty power, and that when He comes, He will raise the dead. The dead in Christ will rise first, and Christians then living will be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and both classes will ever be with the Lord.

Such was the theology of Paul, and this is a good reason why it should be ours. The resurrection of Christ and that of His people, at His Second Coming, were cardinal points in the preaching of the apostles. They gave to these points a prominence that does not exist in the ministrations of the modern Christian pulpit. This difference between the apostolic ministry and the modern Christian pulpit is by no means an improvement upon the former by the greater wisdom of the latter. There is no better rule in preaching the Gospel than to follow the rule of the Bible, and to make that prominent which it makes prominent.

It seems that the Thessalonians received the impression that the Second Coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and the end of the

world were events then near at hand. The apostle, in his Second Epistle to this Church, corrects this impression, and exhorts these Christians not to be "soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand." He adds that this day will not come until after the occurrence of certain events which he predicts. Eighteen centuries have since rolled away, and that day is still future. It will, however, come, and then what the Bible says on this subject will be fulfilled. Christ's Coming to raise the dead and judge the world, as set forth in the Word of God, is not uncertain, because it has not yet occurred.

Peter, in his Second Epistle, speaks of scoffers as appearing in "the last days," as walking after their own lusts, and saying: "Where is the promise of His Coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." His answer to these scoffers is in these words:

"But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing—that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men

count slackness ; but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night ; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat ; the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

This "day of the Lord" mentioned by Peter is the period mentioned by Christ Himself, when He "shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him," and when "all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." The Second Coming of Christ is no fable. The resurrection of the dead, both of "the just and the unjust," at His Coming, is no fable. The judgment of the world by Him is no fable. The dissolution of the present earthly system is no fable. All these great events have their date in what Peter calls "the day of the Lord," which "will come as a thief in the night."

That "day" may not come in our lifetime ; but, whether it does or not, it is in the plan of God as a part of the history of this world. He has so declared in His Word, and so it will be. We shall be in existence when that "day" comes, and all share in its events. Happy will it be for us if God in Christ shall then recognize

us as "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ." This will make it to us a day of great joy, glory, and honor. Inconceivably ill will it be with us if our character on earth shall then consign us to the "perdition of ungodly men."

Peter, having referred to "the day of the Lord" as sure to come, and to the events connected therewith, adds these words: "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" That which will prepare us for this "day of the Lord," no matter when it comes, and no matter whether it greets us as the risen dead or as the living who are to be "changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump," is the "holy conversation and godliness" mentioned by the apostle. Having this preparation, we shall have no occasion for fear, though the heavens and the earth should be dissolved, and the elements melt with fervent heat. We shall, with this preparation, have God in Christ on our side; and that will be enough for our perfect security. Nothing can really harm the man for whose protection He is pledged.

May God, by His all-sufficient grace, cause our names to be "written in the Lamb's book of life," so that, whether Christ shall come while we are living, or after we are dead, we shall be ready to meet Him in His glory, and be prepared to dwell with Him forever in Heaven!



## CHAPTER XV.

### THE HEAVENLY BODY.

It appears, from what Paul says in the fifteenth chapter of his First Epistle to the Corinthians, that some of the members of that Church denied the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. "Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead," the apostle remarks, "how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" This implies that some of the Corinthian Christians rejected this doctrine, and that this fact had come to the knowledge of Paul. He deemed the denial a matter of so much importance that he made it the subject of special comment in this Epistle.

Two questions, which the apostle supposes "some man" to ask, are considered by him in the course of his argument with regard to the resurrection. The *first* of these questions is this: "How are the dead raised up?" This question, as he understood it, evidently relates to a *bodily* resurrection, and was intended as an objection to the doctrine. How is it possible that these gross animal bodies, after being dis-



solved into dust and various gases, and, in their constituent elements, scattered hither and thither, and in these elements forming parts of other animal bodies, and, perhaps, of several human bodies in succession, should be the subjects of resurrection? The objection is not stated in this extended form; yet this is manifestly the pith of the question assumed to be asked. The substance of this question has been urged by all objectors to the Bible doctrine of resurrection.

Paul, in his answer, does not undertake to tell *how* the dead are raised up, but rather seeks to show the folly of asking the question. "Thou fool," he says, "that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die. And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain. But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed his own body."

The logical force of this language is that the production of a plant from the seed cast into the earth, and from the death and destruction of that seed, would, if it were not a matter of daily observation, and hence a fact beyond all dispute, be as inexplicable, as improbable, and as difficult of belief, as the resurrection of the dead. We might as well object to such a production as to the alleged resurrection. The ob-

jection, in the first instance, would be against an undeniable *fact* of common observation and, of course, would be of no force. This is what Paul, in effect, says. He makes no attempt to give any theory of the production under the laws of nature, or of the resurrection by the power of God. He contents himself with simply showing the folly of the question, and of the objection intended by it.

The Bible, while stating the resurrection of the dead as a fact coming to pass by the power of God, gives us no theory as to *how* this is done other than that involved in the divine power. Whether the particles of matter composing the body that dies will also compose the body that is raised is a question in regard to which it neither affirms nor denies. It obviously implies an identity, of some kind and to some extent, between the two bodies, but does not tell in what this identity consists. The one will follow the other in God's order, just as the plant follows the sowing of the seed by another order of God ; and the soul that inhabited the one will also inhabit the other. Both, as to the inhabiting soul, are human bodies, and at different periods furnish to that soul a place of residence, and in this respect sustain the same relation to it. Precisely in what sense the one is the antecedent of the other is a question upon which the Bible gives no information, and which no one

can answer, except by sheer speculation, without any facts or authority to support it.

It is well to bear in mind that identity of constituent particles is not essential to bodily identity, as we have it in this world. These particles do not, in respect to our present bodies, remain the same during successive periods, but are constantly changing; and, hence, the man of twenty-five years is not, as to the particles of matter composing his body, what he was when a lad of ten years. He, nevertheless, during the whole period of life, inhabits the same bodily organization, and, in the practical sense, the same body. He never leaves it for a moment, and never changes it for another body.

To assert identity, as to the particles of matter composing the body that dies and those composing the one that is raised, is then, not only to claim in this case a sort of bodily identity that has no existence in this world, but also to frame a theory of the resurrection when the Bible gives none, and to assume knowledge where we have no knowledge. The objection to the resurrection based upon such a theory has absolutely no foundation whatever, since the theory itself is no part of the doctrine as revealed in the Bible.

Paul treats the question as to *how* the dead are raised up as the fool's question; and he was clearly right. God has not answered this ques-



tion, and until He shall do so we cannot answer it, and hence should not ask it. The defenders of the doctrine have sometimes committed a grave mistake in first assuming the particle-theory of the resurrection, and in then setting themselves to work to invent another theory to meet the exigencies created by the one assumed. The better way—indeed, the only wise way—is to accept the doctrine upon the authority of the Bible, without any attempt to tell how the dead are raised up. The attempt can end only in failure.

The *other* question which the apostle supposes to be asked is this: “And with what body do they [the dead] come?” The answer to this question is prefaced by stating, as follows, the general fact of *diversity* among bodies:

“All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory.”

Organized bodies on earth are of many kinds, and so there is a difference between bodies celestial and bodies terrestrial. There is, hence, no difficulty in supposing that the resurrection-

bodies of men may and will differ from the bodies which they had when they dwelt on earth. The doctrine of the resurrection does not imply that the former will and must, in all respects, be like the latter. Diversity may exist here as well as elsewhere ; and that it does exist the apostle proceeds to declare in saying :

“ So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption : it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory ; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power : it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.”

Both bodies—the “ natural body ” that dies and is here spoken of as being “ sown,” and the “ spiritual body ” that is raised—are *material*, yet, according to this description, wonderfully different. The one that dies is laid away in the grave as a corruptible body, in dishonor, in weakness, and as a body of flesh and blood. The other appears as an incorruptible body, in glory, in power, and as adapted to exist in Heaven. The prior body dead is, after the resurrection, succeeded by a better body living, and living forever, without the wants, the infirmities, and liabilities attached to the former body. The soul that dwelt in the one, and retired therefrom at death, is appointed to dwell in the other. That soul will have its final

domicile in a material body, and that body will be fitted to the heavenly world, just as the natural body was fitted to this world.

Of the structure and organization of the "spiritual" body, to which the apostle refers, we now know nothing, except in the general characteristics assigned to it, in contrast with the "natural" body of flesh and blood in which we dwell on earth. These characteristics, however, show it to be a body of much higher order than the one we here inhabit, and that the soul will be greatly the gainer by the change of the latter for the former.

Paul, in his Epistle to the Philippians, gives an important hint in respect to the "spiritual" body. He there tells us that Christ will, at His coming, "change our vile body [the body of humiliation], 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." The body of the resurrection, fashioned after the "glorious body" of Christ, is, hence, in kind, the body which His people will have in Heaven after the resurrection. And, inasmuch as, when on earth, they, in respect to their bodies, bore the image of the earthy, and, like the first man, lived and died in earthly bodies, so, as the apostle expressly affirms in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, will they, in Heaven, and in respect to their spiritual bodies,

bear the image of the second man, who is "the Lord from Heaven," and who, when He comes to raise the dead, will give them bodies "fashioned like unto His glorious body." The "spiritual" body, produced at the resurrection, and, as compared with the "natural" body, incorruptible, glorious, powerful, and adapted to Heaven, adds, under the illumination of Paul's pen, a distinct charm to the heavenly life. It is one of the revealed ingredients of that blissful and exalted existence.

The fact that the construction of this body is placed at the Second Coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead, does not, however, imply that saints, dying prior to this period, pass into the state of unconsciousness, and are not admitted into the heavenly glory at death, and before the resurrection. The Bible, while not discussing this specific question, gives no countenance to such an idea, and all its intimations are just the reverse.

The penitent thief went to Paradise, and was there with Christ on the day in which both died. Lazarus, when he died, was at once carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. Paul was desirous of departing that he might be with Christ in the heavenly world. He thought of his presence here as an absence from the Lord, and was willing rather to be absent from the body that he might be present with the Lord. He expected,

in the event that the earthly house of his tabernacle was dissolved, at once to enter the building of God, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. The Saviour, in His argument with the Sadducees, refers to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as being in the state of conscious life long after they were dead as to their bodies. Enoch and Elijah were translated to Heaven, and, hence, did "not see death." Moses and Elijah appeared and talked with the Saviour, on the Mount of Transfiguration. The great multitude, referred to in the seventh chapter of the Book of Revelation as praising God, was evidently composed of the spirits of those who had already died. These spirits are "the spirits of just men made perfect," mentioned by Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews.

The resurrection, as taught in the Bible, does not, then, mean the postponement of the heavenly state until after this event. Saints and sinners alike pass to their final destiny at death. But, in respect to the righteous, this resurrection does mean what, for the want of a better term, we may, perhaps, call an *epoch*, at which the heavenly life will, in some respects, assume new conditions by the addition of the resurrection body. This body will, thereafter, be an element in that life which did not before exist; and, judging from what the Bible says in regard to the resurrection, we may well suppose that

this will augment the perfection and glory of celestial existence. How spirits exist in Heaven, subsequently to death and prior to the resurrection, whether in the absolutely disembodied state or not, we do not know. Be this as it may, they will, after the resurrection, live in "spiritual" bodies.

We need not, and, if wise, will not, perplex ourselves with any merely curious questions in regard to the resurrection, which the Bible does not, and we cannot, answer. That Book upon the authority of God states a fact which it designates as "the resurrection of the dead," and also declares that, after this resurrection, and as the result thereof, Christians in Heaven will inhabit "spiritual" bodies, fashioned like unto the "glorious body" in which Christ dwells there, and contrasts these bodies with the bodies of flesh and blood in which we domicile on earth. This is the great fact set before us in the Word of God, and upon the authority of that Word addressed to our faith. Mere human reason does not teach it, but God does teach it; and this surely is enough to justify its acceptance by reason. What God says must be true.

It is a matter of no consequence, considered as affecting this doctrine, where the "natural" body goes back to dust, whether in a sealed casket or in ocean depths; nor what may be

the ensuing history of the particles of matter that composed it at death. God's power, in the resurrection, is equal to the solution of all the problems that stand connected with the production of what Paul calls the "spiritual" body. Whether we can tell or not precisely how, and to what extent, the "spiritual" body is linked to the "natural" body, is not a question of the slightest importance. The doctrine of the resurrection does not depend upon our capacity to answer this question.

God made the "natural" body what it is, and doomed it to death and decay ; and so when the time comes for it, He will make the "spiritual" body, and fit it for the heavenly life. The apparent ruin effected by the death of the one will be more than repaired by the production and life of the other. The victory of death and the grave will be succeeded by the greater victory of the resurrection and immortality.

It is a grave mistake in regard to the resurrection, or any other subject relating to the government and providence of God, whether natural or supernatural, in this world or in the next, for a being of man's limited capacity to ask too many questions, especially so if to this he shall add the equal mistake of making the answer, in a sense which he shall deem satisfactory, a condition of either his practice or his comfort. Bishop Butler, in his *Analogy*, very

wisely says "that not only the reason of the thing, but the whole analogy of nature, should teach us not to expect to have the like information concerning the divine conduct, as concerning our own duty." We must, in respect to the latter, be sufficiently informed to know what is required of us, as the necessary condition of doing it. But in respect to the conduct of God, and especially the reasons of that conduct, we do not, for any practical purpose, need the same amount of information. No one by searching can find out God, and no one know the Almighty unto perfection. His ways are necessarily higher than our ways, and His thoughts higher than our thoughts. It is but little, indeed, almost nothing, in the field of our actual observation, that we fully understand. We are on all sides, and on all subjects, in the sense of ignorance, enveloped with mysteries that we cannot solve ; and in this sense all mysteries are equal to each other.

We need not, therefore, feel any surprise, or be restless and impatient, when we find that the great doctrine of the resurrection, as revealed in the Bible, involves questions relating to the divine conduct and the divine method of action, which, not being answered in the Word of God, we cannot answer. What we are to do, and will do if we act wisely, is to let these questions stand as mysteries, and simply believe what



God has said on this subject, whether we fully understand all the things said or not. Faith is here our best philosophy. This will enable us to rejoice in the information divinely given, and pursue our march to the grave and the spirit-world, supported and comforted thereby. This will enable us to bury our sainted kindred in the sweet and cheering hope of the resurrection, and then ourselves die in the same blessed hope. Having faith in God, and faith in His Word, we may then say with the apostle: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" We may also add: "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Yes! thanks be to God that, notwithstanding the decay and destruction of the grave, and the utter demolition of what was once most tenderly cherished, He has poured a light upon the destiny of the Christian that shines beyond all this decay and destruction, and shines on forever. Let this light be the guide of our thoughts, and then, whether we sorrow over the dead, or anticipate our own final exit, it will surely be the comfort of our hearts. There is no other light that can equal this in its power to relieve our doubts, hush our fears, and assuage our griefs, or that can give us so much good cheer when called to "walk through the valley of the

shadow of death." It puts on our lips the language of the Psalmist: "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want." It makes the soul exultant when otherwise it would be in despair. It plucks away the sting of death, and enriches that event with the glories that lie beyond it. The resurrection of the body, the "spiritual body" produced, and the residence of that body with its inhabiting spirit in Heaven, all of which are revealed in the Word of God, will destroy the very last vestige of death. Death will then be "swallowed up in victory," and not the faintest trace of it be left upon the face of our existence. The seeming victory of death and the grave is but temporary. The final victory over both is immortal.

The Bible informs us that Christ came to "deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." He died for them that they might be pardoned. He rose from the dead as "the first-fruits" of them that sleep. He will at last raise the righteous dead, and give them bodies "fashioned like unto His glorious body." And, when His whole work in respect to His people shall be finished, then the deliverance He came to achieve will be complete. "The last enemy" will then be destroyed, and eternal victory, through Christ, rest on the Christian's brow. God be praised

for the information. Let man receive and believe it, and be at peace.

Why should we start, and fear to die !  
What timorous worms we mortals are !  
Death is the gate to endless joy,  
And yet we dread to enter there.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE HEAVENLY CHRIST.

BY the heavenly Christ, as the title placed at the head of this chapter, is meant Christ in Heaven, with all the antecedents relating to Him supplied by the Gospel history, and with His office and work there as revealed in the Bible. Christ, in both of these aspects, is the most interesting and wonderful object ever presented to human thought. Our knowledge of Heaven is largely our knowledge of Him.

The history of this Christ, as He was in this world, and in what He said and did and suffered, is not a mere myth, but the record of a veritable human person. There was such a person, and he had a human body and a human soul, and was in this respect bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. He was born of a woman, and, from earliest infancy to mature manhood, passed through all the stages of our common humanity. He was recognized as human by those who knew and saw Him, and as one and the same person. The usual attributes of human nature were as evident in Him as in Saul of Tarsus, or in any

other character of history ; and there is no more difficulty in seeing them in the Gospel narrative than in seeing them in the earthly record of any man.

It is not, then, a mistake in the use of words to speak of Christ as a man, or as the Son of man. The Bible so speaks of Him. The title fits the facts, and the facts fully justify the title. It is, however, a serious mistake not to recognize, in the person of Christ, the essential elements of our common humanity. The fact that He was more than a man, and, hence, that humanity does not fully define His person, does not make it less true that, in respect to His bodily and mental nature, He was a man, and not an incarnated angel. His positive and actual humanity is an important element in the revelation made in the Bible.

The public ministry of Christ, beginning at the age of thirty years, and continuing for some three years thereafter, makes Him the most remarkable character that ever appeared in our world. While never disclaiming His humanity, but rather always recognizing it, He, nevertheless, presented Himself to men as having come from Heaven, and from God the Father, and as being the Son of God ; and was understood by the Jews to make Himself, and did make Himself, equal with God, and for this reason was charged with blasphemy. He wrought miracles

in His own name and by His own power, and appealed to them as proving the truth of His words. He claimed and exercised the right to pardon sin, and accepted acts of divine homage. He spake by authority, and as if familiar with all the secrets of time and eternity, and with all the mysteries of the Godhead. Commands, promises, and threatenings fell from His lips as if He was divine. He declared Himself to be the Saviour of sinners ; and, as such, the way, the truth, and the life to this guilty world. He spoke of His death as a sacrificial atonement, and predicted His own resurrection from the dead. He declared Himself to be personally sinless, and challenged the world to refute the statement. He announced the final and general judgment of the race, and placed Himself on the judgment-throne as the rightful and supreme arbiter of the destinies of men.

Recognizing the divine authority and inspiration of the Old Testament Scriptures, Jesus claimed to be the Messiah so often mentioned in these Scriptures, and so long expected by the Jewish people. His moral teachings are the purest and wisest ever uttered in this world. His personal example is without a stain to mar its beauty. The severest criticism finds in it no defect. All ages have paid to it the profoundest reverence. It commands human respect by its own force. No such life as His was ever before

lived on earth. It stands by itself, unique, peerless, and alone. Among all the millions who have seen and felt its supreme charm, and tried to imitate it, not one has ever equalled the original.

These two classes of facts in relation to Christ—namely, those which mark Him as human, and those which mark Him as divine—are, in the Gospel narrative, stated with equal simplicity and with equal positiveness, without any effort to exaggerate either, or to reconcile them. Taking His total personality and history into the account, we must, if we accept the narrative as true, believe that Christ was God manifest in the flesh, and that in Him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. We must believe what John says: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” The description which John, in the first fourteen verses of the first chapter of his Gospel, gives of “the Word,” assigns personality and divinity to that “Word,” and equally identifies that personal and divine “Word” with the person of Christ.

God, then, came to earth and spoke to men in a human person; and that person was Jesus of Nazareth. This is Christ’s theory of Him-

self, and also that of the apostles. The New Testament being true, it cannot be false. No other supposition harmonizes all the facts ; and no other is consistent with the moral integrity of Christ as a teacher. Nothing, in the record of His earthly life, is plainer than that, while He assumed and often affirmed His own proper and essential humanity, He made assumptions in respect to Himself not befitting any being who is less than God, and not true of any other being.

Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, says : " Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He [Christ] also Himself likewise took part of the same." He adds : " For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels ; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren." The idea of the apostle is that Christ, considered as a *divine* person, had in Jesus of Nazareth, considered as a *human* person, a fitting medium for the manifestation of God to man, and for the execution of the purposes proposed in the plan of man's redemption. He came into this world to save sinners of the human race ; and " it behooved Him " to assume their nature, and appear to them in their likeness. God, in the man Christ Jesus, is God coming to man and speaking to him in and through his own



nature ; and than this there is no other medium of which we have any knowledge, so well adapted to the end, or that we can so readily understand and appreciate. The medium, considered in its relation to man, is the best of which we can conceive.

The incarnation of God in Christ undoubtedly involves a stupendous mystery ; and this Paul freely conceded when, in his First Epistle to Timothy, he said : “ And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness ; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” The reference here is clearly to Christ ; and in respect to Him the apostle admitted the mystery of the incarnation of God in Christ, while he believed the fact and preached it to others. There is no more reason for doubting the positive and absolute divinity of Christ than there is for doubting whether there was a Christ at all. Take Him upon His own showing, and upon that of His apostles, and He is God manifest in the flesh.

This one fact being conceded, then all the marvels, wonders and miracles that lie in the earthly history of Christ, and all the things that would otherwise be inexplicable, and some of them contradictions, fall into line as a fitting sequence. There is no difficulty about Christ

anywhere after faith has passed the Rubicon of His divinity. This settles all other questions, and puts all the other facts in orderly and harmonious relations. Christ's divinity is the one mystery that substantially cancels all others. The mystery of the marvellous Man, that would otherwise be without solution, disappears when that of the God in this Man is accepted. We can account for the Man when we look upon Him as the tabernacle in which dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

Three events, not remotely related in time, stand connected with the termination of Christ's *personal* presence and career among men.

The *first* of these events is His death upon the cross, instigated by the Jews, and decreed by Pilate, prior to which He had pursued His public ministry for some three years, and was known and recognized among the people as Jesus of Nazareth. This ministry led to His death ; and, according to His own teaching and that of the apostles, this death was by the special appointment of God, and by His own choice, and was and is an essential part of His work as the Saviour of sinners. In and by this death He redeemed His people from the curse of the law, being made a curse for them. He suffered, the just for the unjust, that He might bring sinners unto God, and that God might be just and the justifier of those who believe in

Jesus. The Lord's Supper stamps the death of Christ with these features. It was not simply a martyrdom by human violence, but was an atonement for sin and sinners, under God's appointment. God Himself delivered Him to this death by His own determinate counsel and foreknowledge.

We make a great mistake in respect to the death of Christ, if we dispense with its *sacrificial* character as an offering for sin. This one mistake will dislocate and derange all our ideas of the Gospel, and in effect produce and set up another plan. It will give us what Paul calls "another Gospel." The sin-offerings of the Jewish system that had been practised for ages before the coming of Christ, and were divinely appointed, are, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, explained as types of the one great sin-offering to be made by Christ Himself, considered as "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," and also as the "High-priest of our profession." To reject this view of Christ's work on earth is to contradict the Bible.

The *second* event is the resurrection of Christ from the dead. He was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, and on the third day He left that tomb by a miraculous restoration to life. He spent thereafter forty days in identifying Himself to others by "many infallible proofs," and in speaking of the things pertain-

ing to the kingdom of God, especially to the apostles, who were to be the first preachers of His Gospel, and witnesses to the fact of His resurrection. Peter began this testimony on the day of Pentecost, and explained the events of that memorable day on the basis of the fact that Christ had risen from the dead. The apostles continued the testimony to the end of their ministry ; and those who received Christ at all believed in Him as a risen Saviour. Such has been the faith of all His followers from that day to this, and will be to the end of time.

The *third* event connected with the termination of Christ's visible and personal presence on earth, we have in His miraculous ascension into Heaven. The New Testament tells but one story on this point. Luke, in his Gospel, says: "And He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into Heaven." Mark says: "So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into Heaven."

In the Book of Acts it is said: "And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up ; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward Heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel,

which also said : Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into Heaven ? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into Heaven."

Paul, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, says : " He [God] raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." So, also, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, the same apostle says that " when He had by Himself purged our sins," He " sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high ;" and, in his First Epistle to Timothy, he says that Christ was " received up into glory."

These passages tell us what became of the risen Saviour, and how it happens that He is not now personally present among men. They give the ascension of Christ as the sequel of His resurrection. The apostles witnessed the scene with their own eyes, and were hence competent to testify to the fact, and did so testify. It was important to them, and to the world, that they should have the evidence of their senses as to the manner in which Christ finally disappeared from the earth. His resurrection was proved by His re-appearance as the living

Jesus, and His ascension is proved by the testimony of those who saw it.

This sketch of facts, resting upon the authority of the Bible, presents the idea of Christ, as coming down from Heaven, as becoming incarnate in human flesh, as doing and saying and suffering the things described in the Gospel history, as dying upon the cross, as rising from the dead, as by miraculous ascension returning in "His glorious body" to the Heaven from which He originally came, and as thereafter ceasing to be personally and visibly present on earth and among men.

The heavenly Christ is Christ in Heaven with this record in time and on earth. He is not there detached from this record. He will not there repeat the record, and there suffer and die as He did here, and yet He is not non-existent because invisible to us. The materials which form his record here, and which, in the plan of God, were assigned to His earthly life, greatly aid our conception of Christ in Heaven. There is a most important sense in which, with this record before us, and with the exposition of it given in the Word of God, we know of *whom* and of *what* we are thinking when the vision of faith is turned toward the heavenly Christ.

Our information in regard to Christ does not, however, end with the simple fact that He ascended into Heaven. We do not by any means

lose sight of Him at this point. The whole story is not told by simply telling the earthly part of it. That story is succeeded by another of equal significance. The Bible, with its revelation, follows Christ into the heavenly world, whither He ascended, and presents Him to the eye of faith, as the same being there that He was here, in His exaltation and glorification there, as the divinely appointed consequence of His humiliation and sufferings here, and as there pursuing the same work and the same ends that brought Him to this world. It gives us a view of Christ *in* Heaven, as well as of Christ going to Heaven.

Paul, in his Epistle to the Philippians, speaks of Christ as "being in the form of God," and not thinking it "robbery to be equal with God," evidently alluding to His divine nature. He then speaks of Him as making "Himself of no reputation," as taking "upon Him the form of a servant," as being "made in the likeness of men," as being "found in fashion as a man," as humbling Himself, and as being "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," all of which relates to his period of incarnation and humiliation on earth. Then follow these glowing words: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven,

and things in earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Christ as thus exalted and glorified after His sojourn on earth, after His agony and atonement on Calvary, after His resurrection from the dead, and after His ascension into Heaven, is Christ in Heaven. He reigns there as a Prince. Peter speaks of Him as having “gone into Heaven,” and as being “on the right hand of God,” and adds that “angels and authorities and powers” are “made subject unto Him.” He, also, through His Word and providence, reigns on earth with the prerogatives and powers of supreme dominion, and, as an apostle says, “must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet,” and until “all things shall be subdued unto Him.” His regal title in Heaven is “KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.”

Christ in Heaven is also there as the High Priest of the Gospel system. The Bible is very explicit on this point. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, urges them to “consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.” He says that in this Christ, whom he designates as “Jesus the Son of God,” we “have a great High Priest that is passed into the Heavens ;” that “we have such a High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the Heavens ;” that Christ



has "not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;" and that this Christ, having "an unchangeable priesthood," and having once "offered up Himself," "ever liveth to make intercession for us," and is able "to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him."

The same apostle, in his Epistle to the Romans, speaks of Christ as having died and risen again, as now being at the right hand of God, and as there making "intercession for us." It was with reference to Christ's intercession in Heaven that John said: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

What a wonderful Gospel is presented to our thoughts in these passages! Christ, who, as "the Lamb of God," bore "our sins in His own body on the tree," is now in Heaven as the "High Priest of our profession," and there "ever liveth to make intercession for us." We need not trouble ourselves about the *method* of this intercession. It is enough to know the fact, and, in the light of the fact, to know that Christ in Heaven is the friend and Saviour of His peo-

ple, able "to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him." His sin-offering was "finished" when He died; but His priestly advocacy and service will remain to the end of time. Two worlds—earth and Heaven—are alike embraced in His office as the Saviour of sinners. We have a profound interest in what He did on earth, and an equal interest in what He is doing in Heaven.

Paul, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, speaks of Christ in Heaven as being "the Head of the Church," and also "the Saviour of the body." The term "body" here means the Church; and the term "Church" embraces all the followers of Christ on earth and all His redeemed people in Heaven—the Church militant in this world, and the Church triumphant in Heaven. Christ is the Head of this Church in both worlds, being the "King of saints" here, and the "King of saints" there.

The ministration of the Holy Spirit under the Gospel dispensation is the divinely appointed consequent of Christ's ascension into Heaven; and through this ministration He fulfils the promise made just prior to His ascension: "And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." He said to His disciples: "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto

you." This "Comforter" whom he proposed to send as the substitute for His own personal presence, and through whom He would be present, "even unto the end of the world," He declares to be "the Holy Ghost," or "the Spirit of truth."

The special powers of the apostolic age were the gifts of this Spirit; and the gracious influences by which sinners are converted and saints sanctified have come from the same source. The Gospel on earth, with Christ in Heaven, is presented to us as a dispensation of the Spirit; and millions of souls have already found their way to Heaven, and other millions will follow them there, as the result thereof. We are not to forget—what the Scriptures so abundantly teach—that it is by the Holy Spirit that sinners are renewed in the spirit and temper of their minds, and Christians sealed unto the day of redemption. The virtues that characterize the life of earthly saintship are, hence, in the Bible, spoken of as "the fruits of the Spirit."

Prayer is one of the deepest necessities and most select privileges of the Christian heart; and we are taught by the Bible that Christ in Heaven is the medium through which we have access to God by prayer. "For through Him," says the apostle, "we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." Christ taught His disciples to pray in His name, and assured

them that if they did so, they would be heard and answered. Prayer in the name of Christ is not a mere formality which Christians have happened to adopt as a graceful tribute to Him. It has its basis in the appointment of God, and in what Christ Himself is in the Gospel system. It is the will of God that we should come to Him in this way.

These meditations give us a vision of the heavenly Christ, or Christ in Heaven, with the antecedents supplied by His history in this world, and with the revealed facts relating to Him in that world. The Bible tells us who He is, and what He said and did and suffered on earth, and how He left this world, and where He went, and who He is and what He is in Heaven. Being the same in both worlds, He is the one being in Heaven, of whom, as there, we have more knowledge than of any other being who is there. We know him, as there, better than we do the angels, and better than we do the dear friend we have just buried and followed in thought to the celestial land. The most conspicuous object in Heaven—the one most fully disclosed, most easily seen, and in regard to which we can form the most definite ideas—is Christ Himself, taken in connection with what the Bible says about His earthly life. Understanding Him in what He was here and what He is there, and in what He is there doing, we

have in Him the best revelation of Heaven that the Bible contains.

When men disappear from this world by death, and go elsewhere, all their direct and active participation in its affairs, so far as we know, comes to an end. They may have been very important while living, and the results of their living may last long after they are gone, and, in this sense, as is said of Abel, who offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, though dead, they may yet speak. They speak by the influence of what they did and said, when living. But the men themselves are dead and gone; and wherever they are, and whatever they may be or do, they have ceased to be direct actors in the affairs of time. The rich relinquish their possessions to others. Dead generals do not command armies. The orator is silent, and the logician frames no more syllogisms for earth. The judge no longer sits on the bench, and the lawyer no longer pleads at the bar. The ruler rules no more, and the preacher preaches no more. All that is left consists in what dead men leave behind them, as the result of prior living.

Christ, in Heaven, is a very notable exception to this general statement. Though personally absent from this world, He is not by any means dead to the world, or dis severed from it. Though beyond the reach of our senses, He is

not beyond the reach of our faith ; and we are not beyond the reach of His power and grace. His action upon the world, and with reference to it, has not ceased. His offices in Heaven relate to things here, and what He is doing there is a matter of the profoundest interest to His people here. He is there the Saviour of sinners as really as when hanging on the cross and dying for them. He is there engaged in His mediatorial work as really as when He trod the earth as God manifest in the flesh. His work for this world and His relations to it go forward in Heaven, and will continue to do so to the end of time. He is the "same yesterday, and to-day, and forever," important to mankind, not only by what He did and suffered eighteen centuries ago, but also by what He has been doing ever since, is now doing, and will keep doing as long as the world stands. There is no other character of history that furnishes the parallel of Christ in perpetuity of action, or that, being in another world, can reach this world with the direct exercise of any power.

It is true that, not living when Christ was on the earth, we never saw Him in the flesh, and hence that we must see Him as He then was by the exercise of faith. It is just as true that, not being able with our carnal eyes to look into the heavenly world, we must see Him, as He now is, by the same exercise. It is by faith in

the record that God has given of His Son, that we take knowledge of Him in both respects ; and it is by faith that we go to this Christ for our own salvation. Happy will it be for us if his language to Thomas is embodied in our experience : “ Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.” Happy will it be for us if the words of Peter are true of us : “ Whom having not seen, ye love ; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.”

Yes ! thrice happy will it be for us if, when we pass into the spirit-realm, we there meet the King of glory as our friend, and hear from His lips these words : “ Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” This will secure for us the eternal good.

Ill will it be with us, beyond the power of language to describe, if we at last hear from the King of glory those other words : “ Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” These words from His lips, while having their reason in our antecedent conduct, would mean our eternal doom.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE HEAVENLY CHRIST—THE COMPLETION OF HIS WORK.

JESUS of Nazareth began His public ministry at the age of thirty, pursued it for some three years thereafter, died on the cross under the decree of Pontius Pilate, rose from the dead on the third day, and after forty days left the earth by a miraculous ascension into Heaven.

The Bible follows this Jesus into Heaven, and presents Him to us as there seated on “the right hand of the Majesty on high,” as being “King of Kings and Lord of Lords,” as the “High Priest of our profession,” as “the Head of the Church,” in Heaven and upon earth, as the dispenser of the Spirit’s gifts to the children of men, as the medium of our access to God by prayer—in short, as holding royal and gracious relations to our race. Though He has personally left this world, and is, hence, not here as He once was, He has not forsaken it. His eye is still upon it, and His work in its behalf still continues. He is, in Heaven, the sinner’s Saviour, and the ground of comfort and



hope to all saintship. Faith sees Him there and recognizes in Him the offices upon which our salvation depends. These offices are the sequel of what He did and suffered while here.

The Bible, however, does not stop with this revelation of Christ in Heaven. It goes further than this, and extends our view to a period in the great future, when this Prince and High Priest in Heaven, this Saviour of sinners, this Man Divine will return, personally and visibly, to our world, and states the object thereof, with a general outline of the facts and events that will be connected with that return. The revelations of God's Word on this point startle the mind with overwhelming and awful grandeur. No one, believing them, can read them, and be unimpressed by them.

The ascension of Jesus into Heaven occurred at Bethany, in the presence of "the apostles whom He had chosen," who saw Him as He went up, and to whom, "while they looked steadfastly toward Heaven," two angels, appearing as men, spake the following words: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into Heaven." Jesus had scarcely vanished from their sight when this announcement greeted their ears, assuring them that He would come back again to

this world, and that the manner of the coming would be like that of His departure, but not informing them when or for what purpose He would thus return to earth. It was enough for them then to know that He had left this world by ascension into Heaven, and that He had not left it forever.

Peter, who was an eye-witness of the scene, a hearer of what the angels said, and a believer in the fact that Jesus had gone into Heaven, and was there, soon after referred to Him in the following terms: "Whom the Heaven must receive until the times of the restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His prophets since the world began." The Rev. Mr. Barnes, in his Notes on Acts, understands the word here translated "restitution" to mean the completion, the filling up, the consummation and fulfilment of prophecy relating to the whole Messianic plan of God on earth. The word "until" suggests that when this shall have been accomplished, Jesus would again personally revisit our world, not necessarily to remain here, but that He would appear here a second time. Prior to this He would be in Heaven, whither He had just ascended.

Christ Himself, at different times, and on various occasions, used language calculated, and, indeed, intended to convey the idea of both His departure from and His subsequent

return to this world. The following passages illustrate this statement :

“ What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before ?”

“ Touch Me not ; for I am not yet ascended to My Father ; but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.”

“ I go to prepare a place for you ; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also.”

“ I will not leave you comfortless : I will come to you.”

“ If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father.”

“ But now I go My way to Him that sent Me.”

“ It is expedient for you that I go away ; for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart I will send Him unto you.”

“ A little while, and ye shall not see Me ; and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me, because I go to the Father.”

“ I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world : again I leave the world and go to the Father.”

These passages contain clear intimations of Christ's departure from this world, as subse-

quently accomplished by His death, resurrection, and ascension into Heaven ; and some of them also contain intimations that He would come back again and receive His followers unto Himself. Both ideas were on His lips, especially toward the close of His public ministry.

The twenty-fifth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew records the answer which Jesus gave to the question of His disciples in respect to the end of the world. These are His words : " When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory ; and before Him shall be gathered all nations ; and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats ; and He shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left."

The sheep here represent the righteous ; and to them Christ will say : " Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." The goats represent the wicked ; and to them Christ will say : " Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels." The sequel is thus stated : " And these [the wicked] shall go away into everlasting punishment ; but the righteous into life eternal."

Here is a coming of Christ declared by Him-

self in words applicable, not to the destruction of Jerusalem, but only to the final and general judgment, as elsewhere taught in the Bible. This coming is connected with that judgment. Christ places Himself on the judgment-throne. Paul tells us that God "hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance unto all men in that He hath raised Him from the dead." He also says that "we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

What Christ says about His coming, the gathering of all nations before Him and His adjudication upon their character and destiny, not only associates that coming with the final judgment, but corresponds with what the apostle says. He will at last come, not to die for sinners, and not to preach to them a Gospel of salvation, but to judge the world in righteousness. God has appointed the day or time for this judgment; and, if so, then He has appointed the time of the coming.

The same apostle, alluding, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, to the resurrection of the dead, says that "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive," and then adds :

“ But every man in his own order : Christ the first-fruits ; afterward they that are Christ’s *at His Coming.*” The order here stated is the resurrection of Christ first, as “ the first-fruits ” or pledge of that of His people, and then their resurrection “ at His Coming.” This connects the resurrection with the Second Coming of Christ. At this Coming His own words will be fulfilled : “ Marvel not at this ; for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

Paul, in his First Epistle to the Thessalonians, refers, in the following manner, to the Second Coming of Christ and to the events connected therewith : “ For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we [Christians then living] which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent [precede] them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God ; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we [Christians then living] which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air ; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” Here the fact of Christ’s descent

from Heaven is distinctly stated ; and with it is connected the resurrection of the righteous dead, and also the change in respect to Christians then living. Christians, whether the risen dead, or those then living, will meet the Lord in the air, and will ever be with the Lord.

The same general thought was in the mind of the apostle when, in his Epistle to the Philippians, he said : “ For our conversation [citizenship] is in Heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, 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.” What Paul looked for, as here stated, is evidently the Second Coming of Christ, or His descent from Heaven ; and with this event he associated the change of “ our vile body,” of which, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, he speaks as taking place “ in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump,” “ when the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” Wonderful language, and wonderful thoughts expressed by it !

So, also, in Paul’s Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, we have these words : “ Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you, and, to

you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day."

The "day" here mentioned is the day or time "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven," "when He shall come to be glorified in His saints," and when He will "recompense" rest to the righteous and punishment to the wicked—a glorious day to the one, and a wrathful day to the other. The reference is manifestly to the Second Coming of Christ, and to the events, as here set forth, that stand connected with that Coming. He will then "descend from Heaven," and re-appear in our world, attended by "His mighty angels." There will be no doubters then as to the Second Advent. The good and the bad will alike understand that Christ has come.

Peter, in his Second Epistle, tells us that in "the last days" there shall be "scoffers," with these words on their lips: "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell



asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." A part of His answer is as follows : " But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat ; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up." He speaks of this day as " the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." There can be no doubt that he here refers to the Second Coming of Christ ; and with this Coming he connects the dissolution and destruction of the world in its present form, and of all the works that are therein, by the agency of fire. The race of men will pause in its earthly continuity. The terminal limit will have been reached, and generations will cease to succeed each other.

The fact of Christ's Second Coming is equally taught in those Scriptures, in which the words " appear " and " appearing " are applied to Him. This may be seen from the following passages :

" 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."

" But we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him ; for we shall see Him as He is."

" That thou keep this commandment without

spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"I charge thee, therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom."

"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 also that love His appearing."

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

These passages, taken in connection with those in which Christ is spoken of as Coming, and as descending from Heaven, clearly show that what the angels said to the apostles at the time of the ascension, was not only received by them as true, but was by them subsequently enlarged and explained, so as to give us the New Testament doctrine of the Second Advent or Coming of Christ. It is not possible, without disregarding the plain meaning of words, to read this doctrine out of the Bible. Paul be-

lieved it ; Peter believed it ; John believed it ; and they frequently referred to it and emphasized it as an article of faith, and as a ground of comfort to Christians, and a just occasion for alarm to the wicked. They connected the doctrine with very important events in the closing history of this world. It need be no matter of surprise that this doctrine should have so universally incorporated itself into the faith of the Christian Church. The surprise would be if the fact were otherwise.

No such fact, or rather group of facts, as this doctrine sets forth, has yet occurred ; and we must hence look to the future for its realization. If the apostles expected the return of Christ to this world in their day, then upon this point they were in error. Did they so expect ? When Paul says, " We shall not all sleep [die]," or when he says, " We which are alive and remain unto the Coming of the Lord," did he mean to imply that this Coming would be in his personal life-time and that of those to whom he was then writing ? The proper answer to this question is that by the term " we " he meant to group the *whole* body of Christians together as a *class*, including those then living, those who should live afterward, and those who would be living when the Lord should " descend from Heaven," whatever might be the time of this event. This re-

believes the whole difficulty, so far as any exists at all.

That Paul did not expect the Second Coming of Christ in that age of the world, is shown by His own express disclaimer on the point. In his First Epistle to the Thessalonians occurs the language, "We which are alive and remain unto the Coming of the Lord," from which the Thessalonians seem to have inferred that this Coming was near at hand. The apostle, in his Second Epistle to this Church, takes special pains to correct this inference, and exhorts these Christians not to be "soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand," and assures them that "that day will not come" until after a series of events which he proceeds to describe. This shows that he did not expect the Second Advent in that age. Just prior to his martyrdom he said to Timothy that he was "now ready to be offered," evidently expecting to die, and not to be among the living when Christ should come.

Peter tells us that "the day of the Lord will come," and mentions some things that will then occur, and also says that it will come "as a thief in the night." This means that it will not be anticipated and known beforehand, but will suddenly burst upon the world. Not knowing when the Lord will come, we should, "in all

holy conversation and godliness," live as if the event were immediately impending ; and this is precisely the exhortation which Peter gives.

The truth seems to be that the apostles were so impressed with the Second Coming of Christ, that they were in the habit of speaking of it in its significance and importance, and in its relation to other events, without reference to the *time* when it would occur. It was the event itself, and not the time, that filled their minds and moved their hearts ; and they spoke and wrote accordingly, giving to the stupendous fact the impressiveness and force of a reality near at hand.

And, as to the question when Christ will come and do the things assigned to Him in the Scriptures, the true answer is undoubtedly the one involved in the principle stated by Him to His disciples just prior to His ascension : " It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power." God has fixed the times and seasons of all events ; and where He has reserved the knowledge thereof to himself, and consequently denied it to man, it is not for us to know these times and seasons. We may know that certain events will occur, and yet not know when they will occur.

This is precisely the state of human knowledge in respect to the Second Coming of Christ.

That He will come is certain ; but when He will come we do not know. The apostles did not know, and never claimed to know. They never fixed a date for the event. A great many efforts have, in different ages, been made to determine the time of the Second Advent ; and so far as they have been submitted to the test of time, they have all proved failures. This will be the fate of all similar future efforts. The reason lies in the fact that God has not revealed the time, and has not given us any data from which we can certainly infer it. He has seen fit to make it one of the " secret things " that belong, not unto us, but unto the Lord our God.

There is one further question relating to the Coming of Christ and the events connected therewith ; and that is the sequel that will follow His Coming and these events. Paul, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, having declared that Christ will, " at His Coming," raise His people from the dead, proceeds to answer this question as follows :

" Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father ; when He shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under Him. But when He saith, All things are put

under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all."

The term "end," as here used, means the consummation or completion of the whole mediatorial work of Christ, alike on earth and in Heaven. Christ came to earth as the incarnate Son of God, and as the Mediator between God and men. Having completed His mission here, He ascended into Heaven, and in that world has ever since continued His mediatorial office. At the time appointed He will return to this world, raise the dead, judge mankind, and assign the righteous and the wicked to their respective destinies.

And then will come what the apostle calls "the end;" by which he evidently means the completion of Christ's mediatorial reign. Then His office as Mediator will cease. Then it will have accomplished its entire work, and disappear under the government of God. Then Christ, in the language of the apostle, will "have put down all rule, and all authority and power," and "put all enemies under His feet," even to "the last enemy," which is "death." Then will He deliver "up the kingdom to God, even the Father." Then, "when all things shall be

subdued unto Him," will "the Son also Himself," in His office as Mediator, "be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God," as God, and in what constitutes the divine nature, "may be all in all."

The whole Messianic plan of mediation in the person of Jesus Christ, with all the results thereof, will be finished and ended. The man Christ Jesus and the God Christ Jesus will not cease; the union of the divine and human in the person of Christ will not become obsolete; but the work of mediation, as hitherto existing, will cease, and thereafter God, as God simply, will conduct His own government.

Such is the import of what the apostle says in the words above quoted. It is hardly necessary to add that these words carry us to a point in the great future far beyond the utmost reach of unaided human thought. They give us the final vision of Christ in Heaven.

Summarizing now the contents of this and the preceding chapter, we have the wonderful Jesus of Nazareth presented to us in the following aspects:

1. Jesus, the Man of Galilee, born of the Virgin Mary, and living a human life in this world.
2. Jesus descending from Heaven and coming to earth, and here dwelling for some thirty-three years, as the incarnate Son of God, pos-



sessing and exercising divine attributes, and in this respect claiming to be equal with God.

3. Jesus on earth doing, saying and suffering the things detailed in the Gospel narrative, and in the plan of God assigned to His earthly mission.

4. Jesus at last hanging upon the cross and dying for our sins, that God might be just and the justifier of those who believe in Him.

5. Jesus on the third day rising from the dead as the "first-fruits" of those who sleep, and showing Himself to His disciples by many "infallible proofs," as the Jesus who had been put to death on the cross, and convincing them that His resurrection was a reality.

6. Jesus after forty days—during which He instructed His apostles in regard to "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God"—leaving the earth, and ascending into Heaven, and carrying with Him to that world His record on earth.

7. Jesus exalted and reigning in Heaven as "King of Kings and Lord of Lords."

8. Jesus officiating in Heaven as the "High Priest of our profession," and able "to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him."

9. Jesus descending from Heaven with His mighty angels, and in His regal glory coming again to this world.

10. Jesus raising the dead, and transforming the living, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump."

11. Jesus, on the judgment-throne, assigning to every member of the human family his final and eternal destiny, "according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

12. Jesus receiving and crowning all sinners of the human race redeemed by His blood, and appointing to them a residence in glory with Him forever.

13. Jesus having completed His Mediatorial work, alike on earth and in Heaven, at last retiring from this office, and surrendering "up the kingdom to God, even the Father," that thereafter God, as such, "may be all in all."

14. Jesus forever existent in Heaven as the incarnated Second Person of the adorable Trinity.

15. Jesus eternally the object of saintly admiration and love in Heaven.

Such are the visions of this marvellous Jesus—some of them already matters of history, and others waiting to become such—which the Bible sets before our minds. Where shall we look for the parallel? What uninspired thought would or could have thought out such a Personality? What genius of earth could have invented and combined the materials which the

Bible blends in Jesus? No wonder that the angels "desire to look into" these things.

All other histories sink into utter insignificance when placed in contrast with that of Jesus. Jesus is a personal *reality*, was so when on earth, is so now in Heaven, will be so when He comes to raise the dead and judge the world, and such He will be forever. Nothing in the universe is more real than Jesus, in Himself and in all that the Bible says about Him. He is not a fictitious character, merely an imaginary person, born of human fancy, but a real person, with a life-history attached to Him. Christianity, considered as a religious system, borrowing its title from Christ Himself, is not simply a congeries of conclusions drawn from premises, or a mass of generalizations made by grouping particulars, or a mere series of wise ethical maxims, beautiful in themselves, and practically useful as guides to conduct. All such conceptions fall immensely short of the truth as preached by Christ Himself, and also preached by His apostles.

Christ Himself, as a person, in His nature, powers, prerogatives, offices, affections, sufferings, and acts—in what He was on earth, and what He is in Heaven—is the only Christianity that has any saving importance to our world. He is the very life and soul, the essence and substance, of Christianity; and, without Him,

it has no existence, and surely no power to save. It consists essentially in a *person*, and in what is true of that person. We are not to be saved by a doctrine, or a mere scheme of thought written or printed on paper, but by a *person* who is the Saviour, has the power of salvation, and will exercise that power in our behalf. To tell the story of Jesus, as the Bible tells it, is to preach Christianity. We can never see Him, as He was and as He is, without seeing Christianity.

Whoever, by faith and the fruits thereof, identifies himself with this Jesus, is safe beyond all contingency. The great globe itself may be in a blaze, and all the works thereof may be destroyed by the fires of the last day, and yet that man, recognized, protected, guarded, and guaranteed by Jesus, will have no occasion for alarm. "The day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" will put him in no peril. The good offices of Jesus will take care of him, in life and in death, on earth and in Heaven. Having Jesus for a friend, he will have the friendship of the Godhead. That friendship, once established under the covenants of Gospel grace, will last forever.

Oh, what a blessed immortality is that secured by the soul's alliance with Jesus! No language can tell the full story of its greatness and glory. The Bible sets it forth in the dia-

lect of earth, using the best words thus supplied, and the only words that we can understand ; and, at the same time, it reminds us that the reality exceeds the description, and, indeed, passes beyond all our present powers of thought. May God so impress our hearts with the description that the reality will be ours when life's fleeting day is ended !

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE UNSEEN CHRIST IN HEAVEN.

THE Christ of the Gospel narrative, considered as a person seen and heard by men, was a *reality* to the age in which He lived, and upon that age made a profound impression, while laying the basis for a stronger impression on mankind. This same Christ, having been crucified, and having on the third day risen from the dead, was also a *reality* to those to whom, at different times for forty days, He showed Himself "alive after His passion by many infallible proofs." There was to be, and, in the facts as they occurred, there was, a period when He was visible on earth ; and of this visibility, and the events connected therewith, we have a record in the New Testament, especially in the four Gospels.

This, however, is only a part, and, in the time consumed thereby, much the smaller part, of the divine plan in respect to Christ. His visibility did not begin until He appeared among men in the person of Jesus of Nazareth ; and it ended when, at the age of about thirty-

three years, He left our world and ascended into Heaven. Our bodily senses cannot reach Him in Heaven ; and there is now no spot on the earth where they can find Him. He is, hence, to us an unseen Christ. Vivid conceptions of Him we may and should have ; but actual perceptions we cannot have.

Thomas, who was not present when Jesus first showed Himself to His disciples at Jerusalem, after His resurrection, refused to believe in the fact upon their testimony, saying; "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe." This made a fitting occasion for Christ to teach him and mankind a lesson in regard to faith without sight. Meeting the disciples eight days afterward at Jerusalem—Thomas then being present—and greeting them with the general salutation, "Peace be unto you," He at once fixed His eyes upon Thomas, and, without any explanatory words, said to him: "Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands ; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into My side, and be not faithless, but believing." The Saviour thus offered to him the very evidence which he had demanded, and also suggested to him His own knowledge of the position he had taken.

Whether Thomas actually did the thing pro-

posed to him or not, is not stated ; but it is stated that he instantly exclaimed : " My Lord and my God." He was now satisfied that Christ had risen from the dead, and that the person then and there talking to him was that Christ.

The responding comment of Christ was in these words : " Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed ; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." This comment, while not condemning the faith of Thomas upon the evidence then submitted to him, contrasts it with that of those who had not seen. The language implies that, in the antecedent history of the world, there had been persons whose faith was without sight ; and these persons are specially referred to as " blessed."

The plan of God, as disclosed by His providence, contemplated and ordained that there should be a long period—preceding what an apostle calls " the fulness of the time"—in which Christ would not be presented to men as He was in the days of His flesh, but in which He would be the theme of prophetic announcement and anticipation, and in which His work would be symbolized by a divinely appointed system of sin-offerings and priestly service. This was intended to be preliminary and preparatory to the actual and personal Coming of



Christ to our world. The Old Testament Scriptures record the facts of this period, and also connect them with the Jewish people, as a part of their history and that of their patriarchal ancestry. The Epistle to the Hebrews very clearly shows that the *sacrificial* system established by the laws of Moses was typical of the one great sacrifice to be made by Christ, when as "the Lamb of God" and the "High Priest of our profession," He should appear among men.

There can be no doubt that the saints who, during this preparatory period, lived and died before Christ came, and who, though they never saw Jesus of Nazareth, believed in the coming of the promised Messiah, and also in His work of atonement shadowed forth by a typical system—some of whom are expressly mentioned in the Epistle to the Hebrews as examples of faith, and all of whom were saved by the grace of God through Christ as yet unseen by men, and yet to die for sinners—are included, and were intended to be included, in the category of those who "have not seen, and yet have believed." The language, as it fell from the Saviour's lips, looked back to what was then past, and fitted alike the experience and the circumstances of those who believed in Him and His work before He appeared among men in a body of flesh and blood. We learn from the Epistle to the Hebrews, that the

Gospel was preached "unto them" as well as unto us. They had it in a symbolic system, and through the ministry of prophets; and although they never saw Christ in the flesh, they, nevertheless, believed in Him, and were saved by Him. This is the specific point of contrast between their faith and that of Thomas, who believed because he had seen.

Living, as we do, since the Coming of Christ, and since His ascension into Heaven, we look back to the time when He came in a visible form; and these saints of antiquity looked forward to the time when He would come and do the work assigned to Him. They believed in what was to be, and we believe in what has been; and although we may have more light than they had, still, in respect to the question of faith without sight, our position and theirs are essentially similar. The mind and heart are, in both cases, occupied with the same Christ, the same salvation, and the same method of salvation. The Old Testament Messiah is the Jesus of the New Testament. It was faith with sight only during the short period in which He was on the earth, and even then only to those who saw Him. Vastly the longer period is that of faith without sight. Christ did not personally appear among men until "the fulness of the time" was come, and did not stay in this world beyond the appointed time.

What Peter says, in his First Epistle, written after Christ had ceased to be visible to the inhabitants of this world, and addressed to "the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia," who had never seen Christ, is in direct line with the language of the Saviour to Thomas. The apostle thus describes the experience and the circumstances of these strangers: "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." Assuming these strangers to be Christians, and understanding the nature of a true Christian experience, the apostle thus sketches their experience in the two fundamental exercises of faith and love without sight.

The fact, as thus stated, is no specialty marking the experience of these strangers, in distinction from that of other Christians who have lived since the ascension of Christ into Heaven. The language is just as true now as when it was first written. It has remained true during all the centuries that have rolled away since that age, and will so remain to the end of time. Millions of persons have attached themselves, with supreme devotion, to the unseen Christ, many of them dying as martyrs, and all of them loving and trusting a Saviour on whom

their bodily eyes never fastened. They communed with Him in life. They thought of Him as a personal reality. They spoke of Him and to Him. They hoped in Him. They looked upon Him as a friend to whom they could safely commit all the interests of their being. His name and person were dear to them. Every thought of Him gave them comfort. They sought to imitate His example. His will was their chosen rule of action. Some of them left kindred and home to preach His Gospel in strange lands. They found life's richest and purest pleasure in Him ; and when at last death came, they yielded up their breath in the full assurance that He would not fail them. This Christ, though unseen by them, was to them a personal reality, as truly as He was to apostles when seen.

This is not an exaggerated statement of a fact. Peter did not overdraw or misstate the fact when he described Christians as loving and believing in the unseen Christ. This is just what patriarchal and Jewish piety did before He came, and what Christians have been doing for ages, and will continue to do in all the ages yet to come. God best knew how to construct and arrange the whole plan of human salvation ; and in that plan the Saviour of sinners was to come to earth in the robe of our common humanity, and here personally dwell but a

short period, and, with the exception of this period, to be an unseen Christ. Such is the plan of God, and such is the fact as we find it.

The resulting task which this arrangement imposes upon the human mind, is the acquisition of that sort of *spiritual realism*, in respect to Christ, that, for all the purposes of allegiance to Him and His cause, of comfort and hope through Him, and of salvation by Him, will make Him as a *person* and a *Saviour* real to thought and feeling, without any intercourse with Him through our bodily senses—indeed, so real that the mind and heart will be impressed with Him and by Him, just as they would be if we actually saw Him, and were thus put in communion with Him.

Some degree of this realism every Christian must have, in order to be such at all. The higher the degree, the more positive and constantly assertive the realism, the greater will be the power of Christ in human hearts, and the larger the streams of comfort and joy that will flow from Him into those hearts. To attain such realism in its highest form should be the earnest effort of every Christian. The attainment is not impracticable. Christians may, if they will, live and die in this state of mind toward the unseen Christ, making Him as real to them as if they actually saw Him. Thousands of Christians have done this, and all may

do it. We have but to comply with the conditions of the attainment, and the result will ensue.

The Bible Christ is the Christ whom that Book reveals, and certifies to thought, upon the authority of God ; and, hence, as an indispensable condition of having this Christ before and in our minds, we must read the Bible true in all that it says about Him, giving to its testimony full and implicit confidence. There is no substitute for this confidence, and none for the Word of God. The Bible, thus read, takes the place of vision and supplies its absence. It, in effect, becomes the eye of the soul ; and through it we mentally see Christ, and what we see is as real to the eye of faith as if seen by that of sense.

Infidels, cavillers, doubters, free-thinkers, those who glory in their own reason, and half-way believers who neither positively affirm nor positively deny, do not supply this condition. They are not, and in their mental posture cannot be, spiritual realists in respect to the unseen Christ. His name may be on their lips, even in respectful forms of speech ; but, in the realistic sense, He is not in their minds. Speculators, dreamers, and even scholars they may be ; but the Bible absolutely true they have never read. That Book is either not their mental law at all, or not sufficiently so to make

real to them what it says and because it says it. They have no experience wrought into the soul, stamped upon its operations, and controlling its action, resulting from the Bible fully believed, and freighted with good news on the basis of God's authority. It takes faith to secure this experience, and this they have not. They either doubt too much, or deny too much, to be the subjects of such an experience.

Knowledge, gained by devout study of what the Bible says in regard to Christ, is the second condition of this realism in respect to Him. The Bible has a story to tell about Christ; and it tells that story, beginning with a germinal promise in the Garden of Eden, continuing the recital through all the ages of patriarchal and Jewish history, giving the record of Christ as He was on earth, revealing Him as He is in Heaven, and reminding us that He is one and the same personality through all the phases, stages, and details of the marvellous disclosure—"the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." It takes the whole Bible to tell the whole story of Christ; and if we would have Him before our minds, as He appears in this story, we must not only believe the Bible generally, but must make ourselves familiar with the story in all its parts. We need information in regard to Christ, and the Bible has just the information that we need.

The more we know of this Christ the more faith will see to believe ; and the more it believes what it sees the more real will He, alike in His person and His work, become to the soul. Growth "in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" expands the vision of faith, and at the same time intensifies it as an experience of the heart, giving it more to see, and making more and more real to it what it does see. The Christian who has, or may have, a Bible in his possession, but who neglects to study the Bible Christ in the Bible itself, makes a very grave mistake in the matter of spiritual realism. Not knowing what the study would do for him, he is not aware of the gravity of the mistake.

The literature of the Christian Church, in the form of sermons, creeds, theologies, commentaries, and compilations, may be helpful to thought ; but it is no substitute for the Bible ; and, moreover, all this literature is the product of uninspired human thinking, and is good or bad as it does or does not correspond with the Bible. The Word of God is the best Christology known among men, and the only one that can be trusted with absolute confidence. God gave us this Word that we might in it learn who Christ is, what He did and said and suffered on earth, and what He is doing in Heaven ; and if we make the proper use of the means



thus supplied, Christ, though invisible, will be as real to us as He would be if visible. This is just the effect which the Bible is adapted to produce, and, when devoutly studied, always does produce, in believing human minds.

We should add, as a third condition of spiritual realism, the meditative habit of mind in regard to Christ. One thereby often recalls his knowledge of Christ, and keeps it alive and fresh in his memory, and thus keeps the unseen Christ present with him as an object of affectionate thought and believing trust, and also keeps himself practically in the presence of this Christ. His knowledge in this way becomes a living power of impression, and repeats its own impression at short intervals. He mentally sees Christ here, and sees Him there. He sees Him as He was on earth, and sees Him as He is in Heaven. An endearing intimacy is thus established between the soul and its Saviour, which, to the former, becomes more and more real by its own continuance, and excludes all doubt as to the truth of what the Bible says in regard to that Saviour. The whole idea of the Bible Christ is thus worked into the mind, as a living and joyous experience and a glorious reality.

Nothing in the universe, to the meditative believer who makes the Bible the law of his meditation, and feeds that meditation with its

thoughts, will be more real than the unseen Christ. He will have an experience of intimacy and acquaintance with this Christ, and of hope through Him, which only his habit of mind can secure, and which, being secured in this way, nothing can disturb. The unseen Christ will be all in all to him, alike in life and in death. His spirit will be the hallowed guest-chamber where that Christ permanently dwells as "the hope of glory." That man knows whom he has believed, and what he has believed. His mental position is a definite one, and not more definite than intense. He may not be able to contend in battle-array with the arguments of infidelity; he may not be a logician after the method of the schools; yet he has an argument in his own soul—in what he feels and knows by experience—which infidels do not understand, and which, to him, is a perfect answer to all their cavils. Like the man born blind, whose eyes Christ opened, and who knew that fact, he knows by experience what Christ has done for him, and what He is to his heart; and nothing can get this knowledge out of his mind. A realized Christ makes a demonstration to the soul practically as conclusive as the clearest utterance of consciousness.

"Blessed," then, are they who "have not seen," yet who, devoutly believing the Bible, prayerfully studying the Bible Christ in that

Book, and thoughtfully meditating upon the information given, "have believed" in the unseen Christ. They see enough by faith, and that faith is sufficiently real in the object upon which it fastens, to make Christ unto them all that sight could make Him. They can get along in this world without sight. They have no occasion to regret that they were not on the earth when Christ was here. He is as real to them as if they had seen Him in the flesh. It is not their misfortune that they were born in the nineteenth century, or that faith without sight is the law of their intercourse with Christ.

Such spiritual realists, in their present mental attitude toward Christ, supply one of the fundamental conditions for the proper apprehension of the Bible Heaven. He who has studied the Heaven which the Bible reveals, and formed his ideas of that world from what is thus made known, must have perceived that, alike in respect to the method of going there and the state of blessedness when there, this Heaven is largely a Christological Heaven—indeed, so largely such that, if Christ were removed from the conception, the whole conception would be most radically changed. The Bible, in telling the story of Christ, reveals Heaven as a vital part of that story; and the same Book, in revealing Heaven, tells that part of the story which has its locality in Heaven.

We cannot separate the Bible Heaven from the Bible Christ. The two are connected, and mutually imply each other.

The Bible informs us that Christ, in His higher nature, existed before He came into this world, and that when He came, He came down from Heaven. The same Bible tells us that when He left our world, He ascended into Heaven in "His glorious body," and that He is now there as the place of His special abode. He is there as the Mediator between God and men. He is there as the "High Priest of our profession," and our "Advocate with the Father." He is there as the Head of the Church in Heaven and on earth, and as the "King of saints." He is there as the "King of Kings and Lord of Lords." He is there as "the Lamb of God" who has redeemed His people with His own blood. He is there as the object of saintly and angelic worship. He is there in His exaltation and glory, as the sequel of His sufferings and death on the earth.

Songs of praise in honor of Christ are chanted in the heavenly world. Co-residence with Him there is one of the Bible ideas of Heaven. The joint-heirship with Him, of which an apostle speaks, is to be realized in Heaven. The place which He has gone to prepare for His people is in Heaven; and there, according to His own promise, He will receive them unto Himself,

that where He is there they may be also. The throne upon which He sits is in Heaven ; and from that throne He speaks and says to our world : " To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne."

These ideas of the Bible Christ in Heaven penetrate and color the whole conception of the Bible Heaven. They are inseparable from it, and a very material part of it. We cannot state either the Heaven or the Christ, as made known in the Bible, without stating them. We cannot properly think of the one without also thinking of the other. In a word, the Bible Heaven is pre-eminently a Christological Heaven.

The necessary result of this fact is that, in order to have the Heaven of the Bible before our minds and in our thoughts, we must here, while in the flesh, and on our way to the spirit-world, be realists in respect to Christ, as He was on earth, and as He is in Heaven. If we do not think of Him as He is revealed, we will not think of Heaven as it is revealed. If we lose sight of Him, we will lose sight of Heaven. If He is virtually a fable to thought, Heaven will be a fable to thought. If our faith does not make Him real, it will not make Heaven real. If we have no Christ in our religion, we will not have the Bible Heaven in that religion.

If, on the other hand, we regard Him as a personal reality, in all that the Bible says about Him, and know what it says, then the Bible Heaven will also appear to us as a reality. Believing in Him, loving Him, and making Him real to our thoughts and affections, we thereby see Heaven in Him and through Him, as we cannot without Him. He fills so large a place in the Bible Heaven, that, with Him fully in our minds, that Heaven must also be there.

Happy is that man whose realistic faith in respect to Christ not only gives him the present joy and comfort thereof, but also supplies the proper mental condition for apprehending the Bible Heaven, and who, when he thinks of Heaven, thinks of Christ as being there, and of what He is there, and of himself as going there, and there forever dwelling with Him, when death shall release him from the tabernacle of flesh and blood. Christ means something to him here, and Heaven means something to him here, because he here believes in Him with a faith that makes Him real there. There is a Christ, seen and realized by faith, in the plan of that man's salvation; and there is a Christ in that man's thoughts of Heaven, and neither the salvation nor the Heaven is ever detached from this Christ. He expects to meet Christ in Heaven, to know Him there, and there be

greeted by Him with a gracious welcome to "the inheritance of the saints in light."

Paul, walking by faith, and not by sight, yet making his faith the equivalent of sight, was evidently a spiritual realist in respect to Christ. Nothing was more real to him than Christ Himself. He had a desire to depart from this world, deeming it better for him than to abide in the flesh; and this feeling had its basis in his desire "to be with Christ" in Heaven. He declared himself willing "to be absent from the body" that he might be "present with the Lord" in Heaven, as he could not be while remaining in the body. This presence "with the Lord" was a large idea to his mind. When, just prior to his martyrdom, he thought of "the crown of righteousness" which awaited him in Heaven, he also thought of "the Lord, the righteous Judge," who was there, and who would "give" him that crown. The Heaven of which he thought was directly connected with the Christ of whom he thought, and was real to him because Christ was real to him.

Christ, in all the facts of His history and work on earth, and in all the facts of His history and work in Heaven, was a personal reality to the mind and heart of the apostle, and controlled both thought and feeling with absolute supremacy; and, hence, Heaven as his own place of final abode, and as the boon of grace

to him through this Christ, under the conditions and with the ideas thus supplied, was an equal reality. He distinctly says: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." His idea of Christ involved in it and carried along with it his idea of Heaven; and if he had lost the former, he would have lost the latter.

If, then, Christians would on earth have Paul's experience, they must on earth imitate his way of thinking. They must be spiritual realists by faith in the unseen Christ. They must, like him, know whom they have believed, and what they have believed in regard to this Christ, and must believe what the Bible tells them to believe. This will give them Paul's experience, and nothing else will. They need not concern themselves with the speculations and disputes of theological schools, or with the cavils of infidelity. It will be enough to take the Bible Christ into their heads and hearts, as set forth in inspired words, and in the plain and natural meaning of these words, and, by loving and believing in that Christ, to make Him real to them. This will open the fountain of bliss in their own experience, and open their eyes to a vision of the heavenly life. They will see more in this way, and see it better, than they can in any other way.

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in soothing power was Jemmie's hand. He became the kindly critic of her father's every work. Those famous articles on Eden which first appeared in the *New Independent*, and which are now circulating through the press in book form, were sometimes entirely reconstructed at her suggestion, and, while within two or three miles of Heaven herself, she sat and disdained its glories, her residence there of many days already enabling her to know more about it than her father knows after his devoted studies of a lifetime. Noble, pure and glorified woman!

Who shall explain why this should have happened now? Twenty years from now he could have been better spared, for at that time the father will not need any more ministrations, and the chief work of his life would be over. Twenty years ago she could have been better spared; for then she would have been not such weighty responsibilities were upon her. Why, at this time must she suffer the treachery of a typhoid fever, which one day promises to release her from the fever and the next threatens collapse, leading her into every day threads white and blue, hopes and fears, until suddenly she gives up her last breath? To that mystery I cannot offer an answer; but not forever. I suppose one day the grandest delights of the next world will be the explanation of things we could not understand in this. And I suppose her father would have wanted her. And I suppose that she had greater employment for her. And I suppose she had long enough studied God's immortality under the disadvantages of earthly limitations.

The mystery and severity of this prove to us what they may do to the venerable father, who by it has lost his only daughter, who seemingly he most needed her, or to the afflicted husband, who by the same affliction has lost the wife of his love, let us know that all things work together for good to them that love God. God makes mistakes in the government of this world, but always deals with his own children in mercy and love. "We have had fathers of our fathers which corrected us, and we gave them thanks; shall we not much rather be in the hands of the Father of spirits and

live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he chastened us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them which are exercised thereby." We mourn and weep over our sainted loved ones who are dead. They are, however, dead only in this world, and that, too, not forever. If we love and trust the Saviour they loved and we shall meet them again on "the other shore," and with them dwell in the heavenly mansions. Let the hopes in our hearts be confirmed and authenticated by the Word of God, and let it cheer us as we pass through this vale of tears. There is no sorrow of earth that Heaven will not cure, and no affliction of God's people that is not really "a blessing in disguise."

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