

II.

There is next, THE REST OF PARADISE.

On this I wish to dwell a little more fully : and from this part of my subject, I would like to remove, so far as I am able, some of the popular misconceptions.

This is the rest of Christ's departed saints in Paradise, of which a sainted Bishop of our Church sings in one of our loveliest and best known hymns :

"For all the saints who from their labors rest,
Who Thee by faith before the world confess'd.
Thy Name, O Jesu, be forever blest.

Alleluia.

The golden evening brightens in the west :
Soon, soon to faithful warriors comes the rest :
Sweet is the calm of Paradise the blest.

Alleluia."

This is the rest from the toils, and weariness, and strifes of earth : this is the rest from all the pains and diseases, and manifold ills and sorrows of this mortal life : but *not*, (oh ! no) *not* a rest from prayer, and praise, and holy worship ; not a rest therefore from the loftiest, the noblest, the most inspiring of all our spiritual activities.

The saints departed are described by our Lord not as dead, but as living, living unto God. They are living in the Intermediate Life. In the words of St. Paul, "They are absent from the body, present with the Lord : " That is, their spirits, their living spirits, equipped no doubt with a spiritual body, are now present with their Lord, and ours, in Paradise.

It is needless to say that this Intermediate Life, lived in the presence of Jesus in Paradise, is a life of happiness. Holy Scripture more than justifies our Church in describing the present state of Christ's departed saints as one of "joy and felicity."

But for all that, they are not yet made perfect. How can they be made perfect till they receive the resurrection body ? How can their happiness reach its fulness till after the awards of the judgment throne of the Son of man ? Till they hear the voice of their Saviour and their Judge welcoming them to their heavenly home, and to their eternal inheritance : "Come, ye blessed children of My Father, in-