

minds of most people, are very far removed from the truth. She might say the same with regard to the most exalted conceptions ever formed of the blessedness of a future state for the righteous. *That which has not entered into the heart of man to conceive*, must of necessity occupy a position outside of all man's speculations. Yet human curiosity is aroused to enquire into the nature of the future life of happiness. Should we not endeavour to answer the questions that it puts to us? Should we not endeavour, by promises of physical and mental and social enjoyments denied on earth, to draw forth the affections of the young and the ignorant towards Heaven? These and kindred questions have long been before the world. Miss Phelps has not been the first to answer them, even affirmatively, leaving out of sight her modern co-speculators, the Spiritualists. When scholasticism had trampled out the little life that remained in the Church of the Middle Ages, such questions began to be agitated, and to be answered in the affirmative. It is true the learned authors seemed more at home in treating of Purgatory, a field which they had all to themselves; but when they turned aside from it to treat of the joys of Paradise, their manner was not unlike that of the author of "The Gates Ajar." The Schoolmen drew much of their information from such worthy authorities as the Jewish Talmudists and the Semi-Pagan Gnostics. Had they known Arabic, they might have got a few hints from the Koran, and an acquaintance with Sanscrit would have saved these wise speculators some painful invention, by furnishing them with ready-made descriptions, glowing with oriental richness of imagery, once offered at the shrines of Brahma and Buddha.

As long as the Church is active, whether that activity be developed under persecution or more prosperous conditions, we hear little of the literature which we are now considering; but just as soon as vital religion languishes, as the Sabbath becomes a weariness, the word of God an oft-told tale, and the name of the Saviour that of one very far off, so soon do books like "The Gates Ajar," and "Our Children in Heaven" come in to create a false religious feeling, to galvanize a dead soul into a momentary life not worth the effort that created it. The age of Louis XIV in France possessed such a religious literature, and just such an one strove to make head on the Cavalier side against the solid expositions of Bible truth, behind which the Puritan intrenched himself in the dark days of Laud, and the yet darker years of the Restoration.

The doctrine of Heaven has ever been one dear to the Christian soul, and at no time has it been more so than on the occasions above referred to as generally fruitless of speculation upon the minor pleasures and individual joys of a future state of happiness. To Augustine is attributed that hymn so full of deep soul-longing, and which sets forth so simply and scripturally the bliss of the redeemed, beginning—

"For the spring of life eternal
Ever longs the thirsty soul."

Augustine was no castle-builder, nor was that old poet of the time of Queen Elizabeth who wrote the song so full of unction that Miss Phelps deigns to place part of it between quotations from Swedenborg and Bonar, "O mother dear, Jerusalem." A Kempis could express himself with all fervency of soul and sublimity of language, with all clearness of meaning, and yet within the limits of Scripture statements, while dwelling upon Heaven and its glories. Calvin's rapture in view of that which remains for the people of God after their earthly pilgrimage is ended, seems to have culminated in the words of the loved Apostle: "Beloved, now are we the sons