

CHAPTER III.

Heaven the Home of the Penitent Believer.

"To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."—Luke xxiii, 43.

The conversion of the dying thief was not necessarily sudden and immediate. Perhaps it was not the first time he had seen Christ. Perhaps while on some iniquitous and plundering expedition he had been arrested by the voice of the great prophet of Nazareth as He was addressing some assembled crowd of listening thousands, and the truth, long working in his heart, needed only the scene of divinely patient suffering he witnessed now to produce, by the blessing of God, this miracle of grace, *his conversion*. We shall not attempt, in dealing with this incident, to paint pictures. I have a far more important thing to do than even to try to bring vividly before your minds the scene on that little hill of Calvary. It is the meaning that we are concerned with, and not the mere externals. Let no one imagine that this was a superficial change. Look at the elements of his repentance. There is reverence for God. "Dost not thou fear God?" he says to his companion. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." The dying man in his agony begins to see dimly, as his soul closes upon earthly things, who this is:—patient, loving, mighty there in His sufferings.

There is a consciousness of guilt. "We receive the due reward of our deeds; and we indeed justly." No