



I SEE THEM ALL.

ONE question of all others is frequently asked, and with tearful anxiety, when friends are taking their last earthly farewell of each other—"Shall we meet again?" Our Queen put it to her dying husband, and it has been put by thousands and tens of thousands of loving hearts throughout all generations.

We really need no more than the teaching of Holy Scripture to assure us that heaven is the Father's house, where His redeemed children will all be of one family; and where, as Peter, James, and John knew Moses and Elias, who had died ages before them, we shall become acquainted and hold converse with the great and good of all time.

This was the question which a minister of Christ put to himself many times when on his death-bed. He was very aged, and weary and worn with toil for his Master. From his boyhood he had been engaged in Christian service, and could say with truth, "I Thy servant serve the Lord from my youth." He had outlived his wife and two or three of his children. Of the congregation to whom he had preached his first sermon only two or three remained. Instead of the fathers had risen up the children, and the babies whom he had fondled in infancy were the men and women of a new generation.

As he grew older he went more and more back into the past, and vividly recalled scenes and associations of forty and fifty years ago—far more vividly than occurrences of merely a month back. The old place of worship in which he had ministered so long became peopled to his memory with the faces that looked upon him when he was quite a stripling; he remembered them in connection with certain sermons he had preached, and with certain snatches of conversation which told more of their real character than a bulky volume would have done. He remembered ministers with whom he had travelled and worked for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, and over whose graves he had repeatedly wept tears of tenderness.

They were too vividly in his mind for him to believe that they were not in existence; his faith and love were too strong to allow him for a moment to believe that they were not in the Father's house in serene, perfect happiness. But where was that house not made with hands? How far or how near? In the moment, the most mysterious moment, when the mortal puts on immortality, should he find him-

self amongst any of the sweet companionships of earth? He left the whole question in the hands of his Redeemer, believing that where He was heaven must be, and that his joy would be perfect, and that he should be complete in Him. Yet frequently on his feeble lips were sometimes murmured and sometimes sung to an old tune of his boyhood the words of Charles Wesley's noble hymn—

"My old companions in distress
I haste again to see,
And eager long for my release,
And full felicity.

E'en now by faith I grasp the hands
Of those who've gone before,
And greet the blood-besprinkled bands
On the eternal shore."

A few minutes before his death his face became radiant with a Divine expression, and the glory of heaven took away the gloom from death. With the last effort of expiring nature, he clasped his hands in prayer, and then said in a more audible voice than he had spoken for days, "I see them all! I see them all! They are coming to welcome me, and to receive me into everlasting habitations!" Then he mentioned friend after friend, and while doing so with a smile on his lips, which remained on them for two or three days afterwards, he breathed his last.

Not long ago the writer attended the death-bed of a Christian lady, who years before had lost her mother, in whom her life seemed to be bound up. As her end drew near, she fell into a state of apparent unconsciousness, from which no one thought she would ever awake again.

A minute or two before she died, the eyes that had long been closed suddenly opened, and she cried, with a voice that startled every silent weeper by her bedside, "Mother! Mother!" Then she departed, as we all believed, to be for ever with her mother, and for ever with her Lord.

These are helps by the way which our gracious God occasionally gives us to encourage us to believe that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart of man conceived, the things which God hath prepared for those who love Him. It is only natural that we should ask—

"Can the grave those ties dis sever,
With the very heart-strings twined?
Must we part, and part for ever,
With the friends we leave behind?"

To this, revelation boldly and mercifully answers, "No!" On quiet Sabbaths, when the thought of the dead steals tenderly over our spirits; in quiet walks through the churchyards in which their precious dust lies sleeping, let us not count it fancy when we so vividly realise their existence and their blessedness. But let the thought of their perfect purity animate us to walk as those who are anticipating the inheritance of the saints in light. If we are Christians, we believe that at any moment we may find ourselves translated into their holy society. Are we at all times in the mood for such a translation?