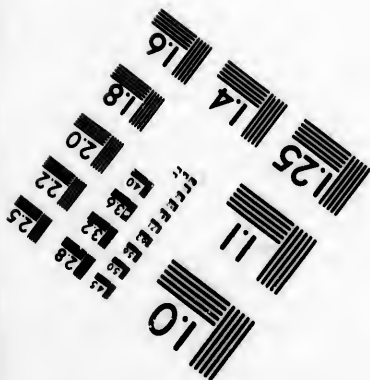
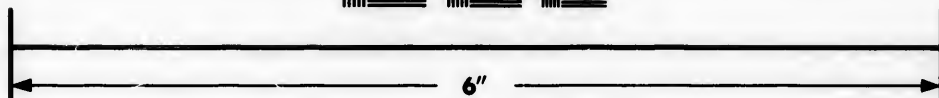
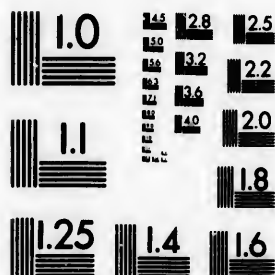


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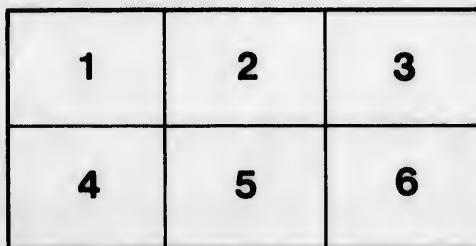
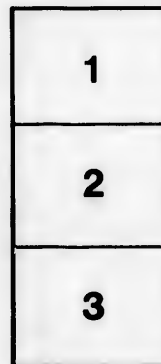
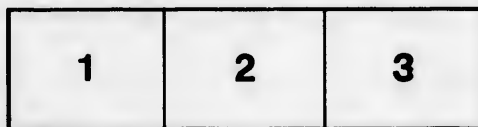
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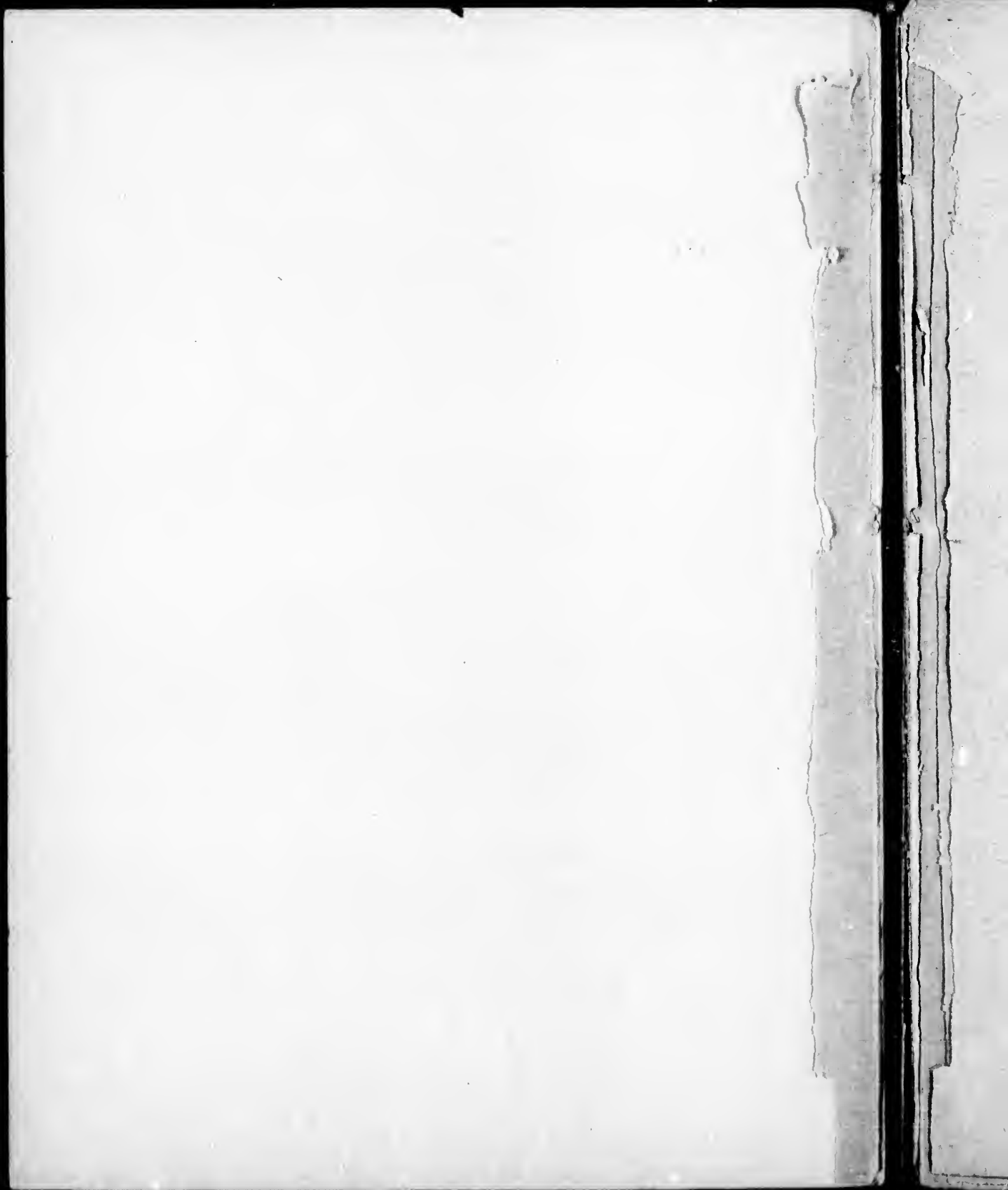
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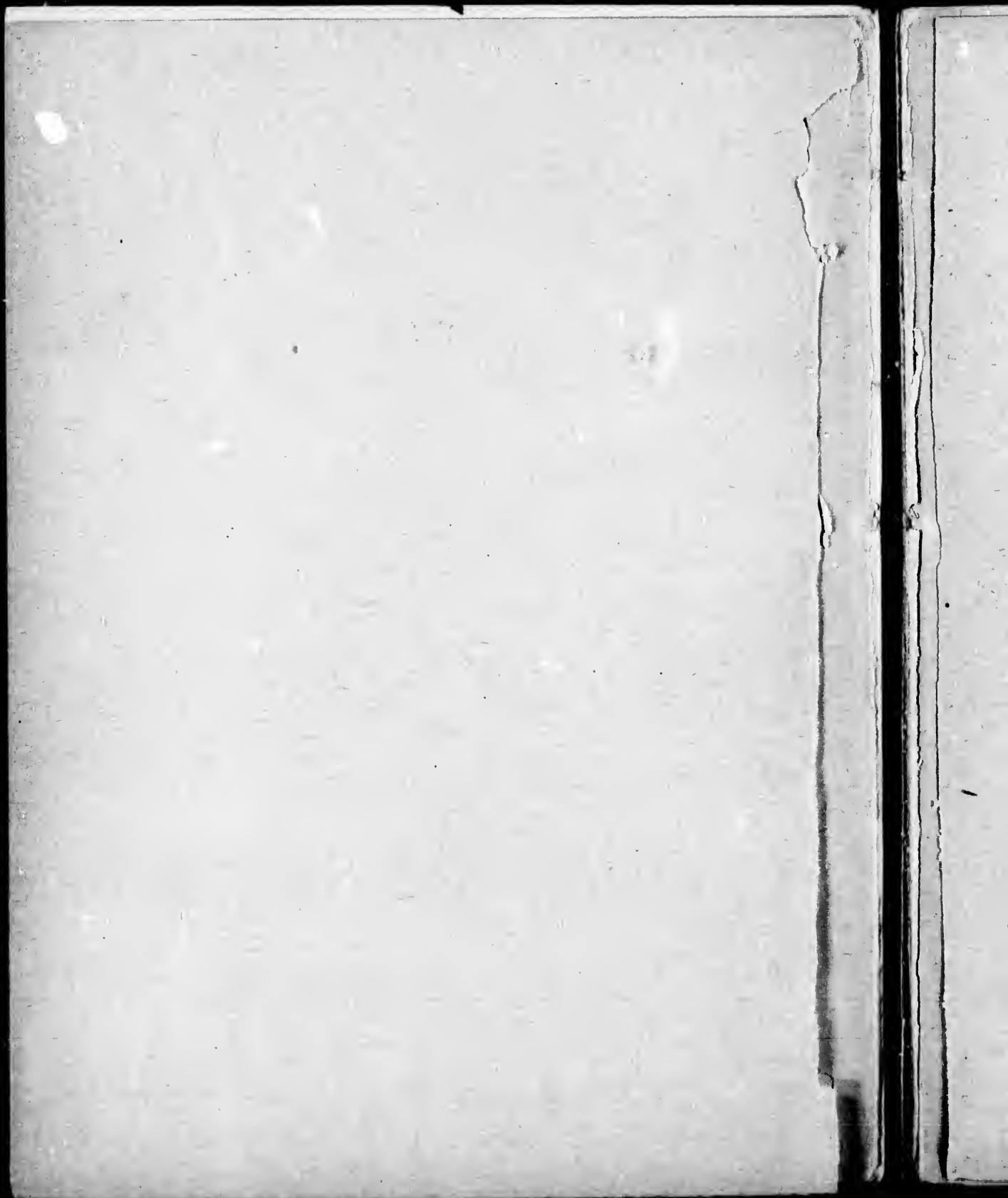
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The Heavenly Inheritance.



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The Heavenly Inheritance,

or

Reasonable and Scriptural Thoughts

regarding Heaven and the

State and Condition of the Redeemed.

by

D. STEWART, Hensall, Ont.

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Prefatory Notice.

My purpose in publishing a limited trial edition of this short treatise on my own responsibility is not simply to assume the role of an author, nor is it even to attempt to throw new light upon a subject that has often been discussed by able writers in more extensive treatises. The author believes that there is a large class who are vitally interested in the subject, but have not the patience to read extensive treatises and who are tired of the misleading representations of Heaven, so often met with, and which are generally founded upon a strictly literal interpretation of the metaphorical language of Holy Scripture regarding the Heavenly inheritance of the saints. To such persons this humble tract specially appeals. The writer, in this brief outline of the subject, has sought to be scriptural as well as scientific, and if in the opinion of a discerning public he has succeeded, and more especially if the thoughts and aspirations of the reader, regarding Heavenly things, are in any measure directed or enobled through the perusal of these few pages, the author will be more than satisfied.

THE AUTHOR.

Hensall, May, 1900.

“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.”—St. John 5:39.

* *
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The Heavenly Inheritance.



INTRODUCTION.

Blessed are they that are home-sick for they shall get home.—STILLING.

There is, perhaps, no subject upon which the mind and heart of the devout Christian should dwell oftener and more earnestly than the inheritance promised him beyond this life. He is, by his very profession, a stranger and a pilgrim here upon earth, an exile upon a foreign shore; and by adoption into the family of Jesus Christ, he is a citizen of the kingdom of Heaven and heir to an inheritance that is incorruptable, undefiled and that fadeth not away. It is natural, therefore, that the Christian should think much of Heaven. Tossed about by adverse winds and treacherous under currents upon the sea of life, it is natural that he should often look earnestly and longingly toward his landing place upon eternal shores. In a world where everything is transitory and fleeting, where our fondest hopes are often disappointed, where health fails and friends forsake and riches vanish; is it not natural that the Christian, with the precious promises of God's word to encourage him, and God's spirit to guide him, should meditate often upon those things, which though unseen

are eternal? And perhaps if the truth were known, there are few subjects that intrude themselves oftener upon the mind and inner consciousness of the truly pious Christian, than the thought of our Heavenly home, purchased for us by Jesus Christ at infinite cost and reserved for those, who through living faith in Him and obedience to his commands, shall at last be accounted worthy. But, while as Christians we often think of Heaven, yet it is only thinking. We do not seek to pry into the mysteries of the unseen even as the angels are said to pry into the mysteries of salvation. It is not enough that we think of Heaven in a dreamy, sentimental way as the haven of rest, whither we are all bound, where all is gold and glitter and where pain and parting is unknown. We should seek to gain definite and well defined ideas regarding our Heavenly inheritance, even as we would in the analogous case of an earthly inheritance. Suppose that a deceased friend or relative had bequeathed to you a rich estate in a foreign country. How your heart would bound at the prospect? And with what mingled anxiety and joy you would investigate your claims to the supposed inheritance. And, having satisfied yourself and friends that your title was genuine, you would seek to gain all the information you possibly could regarding your newly acquired possession. You would want to know how it should be managed and what its revenues were. You would study the country, its position and climatic conditions, the form and

probable permanency of its government, the moral and social status of the people, and many other things that would affect the permanency of the value of your possession and your future enjoyment of it. And in a surprisingly short time you would know a great many things about the country of which you were previously entirely ignorant, and all because you had acquired a rich inheritance in it and self-interest prompted you to diligence in seeking information from every available source in regard to it. But is it not a fact that as Christians we do not interest ourselves in the same way or to anything like the same extent in our Heavenly inheritance that the man of the world does in the earthly? Is it because we do not realize that we have much treasure in Heaven; or is it not rather that we gradually allow the things that are near and sensible to us to shut out from our hearts and minds the things that are more distant and eternal? But it may be objected, and perhaps with more seeming force than real, that the Bible is reticent about a great many things that we would like to know regarding our Heavenly inheritance, and hence our sources of information are comparatively limited. It is true the Bible says comparatively little in a direct way about Heaven, but it says a great deal indirectly, and we may learn a great deal from collateral subjects and collateral doctrines, such as the doctrines of the Resurrection, the Incarnation, the Judgment, etc. We

may also employ to advantage, in our search for light upon Heaven and the Heavenly state, the power of enlightened reason and the deductions which this supreme, God-giving faculty of one being is enabled to make regarding the nature and relationship of the kingdom of mind and matter, and the harmonious and inflexible laws by which they are governed. What we may learn of Heaven in this way may not be enough to satisfy a spirit of curious inquiry, but it will be enough to enlighten, strengthen and cheer the truly pious Christian until he reaches the precincts of his Father's house, and is enabled to see "eye to eye" and to "know even as he is known."

The subject before us is an interesting and ennobling one and presents a wide and inviting field for meditation and also for speculative inquiry. But the writer has neither the desire nor the ability to enter into any elaborate or extensive discussion of it, but will confine himself in this short tract to the expression of a few thoughts in a general way, regarding Heaven itself, its nature and locality, and also regarding the Redeemed, their nature and employments, thoughts that he trusts will be helpful and suggestive of further study and meditation to the reader, and will be supported both by the letter and spirit of Divine inspiration and by the light of reason.

Controverted points will be mostly avoided and likewise mere theories, such as "the transmigration of souls," "the sleep of the soul," "the in-

intermediate abode," "the sudden creation of a heaven," "the renovation of the earth," etc., theories that find their support either in the borrowed superstition of past ages, or in the more vaguely prophetic passages of Scripture, rather than in the clear light of inspiration or the dictates of enlightened reason. I will also leave largely to the reader the merely devotional and meditative aspect of the subject, and, also, while seeking to base the different thoughts advanced on a broad and reasonable interpretation of Scripture, will refrain from burdening these few pages with a mass of Scripture references or texts.

THE NATURE OF HEAVEN.

In the first place then, regarding the nature of Heaven, it may be said that Heaven will be a place, a local material habitation. Our Saviour said to His sorrowing disciples: "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 here characterizes the future abode of his people as a place, a local and tangible abode, as distinguished from a state merely, and the inference is that the place of which the Saviour speaks was already created, but that he was going to prepare, or set it in order, specially for His own people. Again, according to the Scriptures, the saints will have bodies, spiritualized and refined it is true, and yet real material bodies preserving their individual identity, and also something at least of the nature and properties of the natural body. This being the case, the place which is to be the platform for the Heavenly activities of the saints, will be as real and tangible as their own bodies, which is a reasonable conclusion. Further, the mind of man has received the impressions necessary to its growth and development from external nature through the channels of the senses, and it would seem at least out of harmony with the known methods of the Divine procedure, to place it after the resur-

rection in circumstances and environments totally different from what obtains here. The descriptions we have of Heaven in the Bible are mainly figurative and symbolic, as where it is set forth as a garden or paradise, as a city, the New Jerusalem, and as a house, the Father's house of many mansions. In these figures inspiration labors, as it were, to translate the glories of Heaven into the language of earth. We have in these figures images and symbols, envelopes of Heavenly treasure, which under the Spirit's guidance we may unroll and make the treasures all our own. But, while as humble enquiring Christians we may learn much from this beautiful and varied symbolism regarding Heaven, yet it is evident that the transcendent glories of the place could never be communicated to men through the poor barren medium of human speech, and, therefore, even the beautiful imagery of Scripture utterly fails to give us anything like an adequate conception of the glories of the New Jerusalem, the house not made with hands. Whether Heaven will have any of the features that give such beauty and loveliness to the earthly scenery, it is perhaps vain for us to speculate. We can safely affirm from the reasonable deductions of astronomy, that even in our own solar system there are worlds, whose nocturnal scenery at least, must be inexpressibly more imposing to sentient beings constituted like

ourselves, than that which we are accustomed to behold. A noted astronomer* thus refers to the magnificent celestial scenery of the planets, Jupiter and Saturn :

“The nocturnal heavens, as seen from this grand orb, must be inexpressibly magnificent. Besides the same glittering constellations which are seen from the earth, the sky of Jupiter may be adorned with no less than four moons, with their diverse phases, some waxing or waning, some just rising or setting, some possibly just entering into or emerging from eclipse. The whole of this splendid celestial exhibition, sweeping across the heavens, rising, culminating and setting in less than five hours of our time. Such are the scenes witnessed by the inhabitants of Jupiter, if such there be. But if the celestial scenery of Jupiter is rendered magnificent by the splendor of his four moons, what must be the amazing grandeur of the nocturnal sky of Saturn, arched from horizon to horizon by his broad, luminous girdle (on which the shadow of the planet, like the dark hand of a mighty dial, will mark the hours of the night) ; the changes, phases, eclipses, the occultations of his numerous moons, and the brilliant background of glittering constellations which gem our nocturnal sky, must altogether form a display of celestial splendour of which the human mind can form but a faint conception.”

But if the nocturnal scenery of these worlds (and which are quite insignificant in comparison to many of the stellar orbs with which the heavens are studded) is so magnificent, how unutterably glorious must be the throne of the eternal One, and which is to be the Christian's

*O. M. Mitchel author of *The Orbs of Heaven*.

future and unfading inheritance. In the beautiful imagery of Revelation the Apostle John tells us that he saw in a vision "a new Heaven and a new earth, and there was no more sea." In this connection how beautiful is the question of the poet :

"What will God give us when he takes the sea?"
 I often ask the question wonderingly.
 In the new heaven and earth we shall not miss
 Whatever beauty we have found in this.
 And we are sure some happy, sweet surprise
 Awaits the opening of the spirit's eyes.
 Yet when I look upon the foam-white shore,
 And thrill to hear the ocean's mighty roar,
 Catch all the colors that delight the eye
 Reflected from the heaven that smiles on high.
 I ask the question often, wonderingly,
 "What will God give us when he takes the sea?"

We may rest assured that when God takes the sea or anything else that contributes to the majesty and loveliness of the earthly scenery He will give us something a thousand times more lovely. And just as the Resurrection body will outshine this clay tenement, so the scenery of Heaven will outshine that of earth. Love is ingenious and God's love is infinite as well as His resources, and when He brings His beautiful and chaste bride, the Church, home, ransomed by the blood of His Own Son, amidst the acclamations of an assembled universe, the place we may rest assured will be entirely worthy of the occasion.

But the Heaven of the saints is not only a place it is also a state, and it is in its character as a state of existence that its blessedness will

largely consist. No matter how inexpressibly grand Heaven might be in its more material aspect if sin and its inevitable consequences might enter, even in the smallest measure or degree, it would not be a fit abode for the blood-washed throng, who are symbolized in Scripture as "walking in white" and being "clothed in white raiment," to denote their unspotted righteousness and purity in God's sight. It may be laid down as a principle, that in order that intelligent, sentient, moral beings may enjoy supreme happiness there must be a perfect correspondence with a perfect environment. Such, no doubt, was the case with Adam in Paradise before sin with its blasting, blighting, disturbing influences entered and marred the fair harmony of that ideal earthly abode. But in the Heavenly Paradise no such contingency is possible, as Revelation distinctly and emphatically assures us that sin can never enter and that the saints go no more out. It assures us that there will be none of the vicissitudes characteristic of the earthly existence, such as pain and suffering, sorrow and bereavement, hunger and thirst, for "the former things have passed away." Transported with the thought of the undimmed and unfading glory of the home that awaits the Christian, let us strive to so live and walk here that we may be accounted worthy to enter the eternal bliss yonder, and while looking wistfully and longingly across

the dark valley in anticipation, let us make the sentiment of the poet our own :

We speak of the realms of the blest,
Of that country so bright and so fair,
And oft are its glories confessed ;
But what must it be to be there !

We speak of its pathways of gold,
Of its walls decked with jewels so rare,
Of its wonders and pleasures untold ;
But what must it be to be there !

We speak of its freedom from sin,
From sorrow, temptation and care,
From trials without and within ;
But what must it be to be there !

We speak of its anthems of praise,
With which we can never compare
The sweetest on earth we can raise ;
But what must it be to be there !

We speak of its service of love,
Of the robes which the glorified wear,
Of the Church of the first-born above ;
But what must it be to be there !

Then let us, 'midst pleasure or woe,
Still for heaven our spirits prepare ;
And shortly we also shall know
And feel what it is to be there.

THE LOCALITY OF HEAVEN.

In the second place, regarding the locality of Heaven, it may be said that the place to which we are all aspiring is far beyond the bounds of all that is visible. Christ, according to the Scriptures "ascended far above all heavens." Paul also tells us that he was "caught up into the third heaven," and which, according to the Jewish conception, is far above the region of the stars. Viewing the matter from a scientific stand point, if we regard Heaven as at all central in God's universe it must be removed from us to a distance that simply baffles imagination. Through the perfection and delicacy of modern astronomical instruments and methods, astronomers have obtained a parallax in the case of a few of the nearest of the so called "fixed stars." The star having the greatest annual parallax, and therefore the nearest to us, is a Centaur, a brilliant star in the southern hemisphere. The distance of this orb is shown to be not less than 21,000,000,000,000 miles from us, a distance which light, the swiftest monitor in nature with which we are acquainted, requires about three and a half years to traverse. The smallest parallax that comes within the limits of computation corresponds to a distance from us such that the same light would occupy 70 years in its flight

from the star in question to our system. But if the nearest and brightest of the stars are shown to be at such vast distances from us, what shall we say of the distance of those countless myriads that are only dimly descried even under the highest telescopic power? And there are other countless myriads still further removed, whose light, in feeble by its dispersion over spaces of almost infinite extent, fails to impress our organs of vision directly, but whose actinic properties impress themselves upon the sensitive plate of the camera. Surely such facts and conclusions regarding the vastness of the physical universe should impress us with a sense of the glory and augustness of our future home, of our own littleness and of the greatness of that Being "who wheels His throne upon the rolling worlds and gives its lustre to an insect's wings."

Heaven is thus shown to be at a vast and incalculable distance from us, but where is it placed, and what relation, if any, does it sustain to the other countless orbs that fill immensity? Some Christian astronomers profess to believe that just as our sun is the great dominating power, the prime mover, the centre of attraction and of heat, light and magnetic influence to the solar system, so Heaven, in a material sense, is the centre of God's vast universe, and around which all worlds revolve. In support of this it may be said that it is definitely known that our one solar system has a progressive motion in space,

and the reasonable assumption is that it is moving in obedience to the great law of gravitation around some vast central body. Further, many of the double and multiple stars are shown to revolve around a centre or around the centre of gravity of the system. It does not seem unreasonable then to suppose that all the stars in the wide universe of God should finally revolve around a single or multiple centre, whose mass and dominating power would be sufficient to sustain the whole fabric of material creation. Regarding such a place as Heaven, how grand and bewildering is the conception, more especially when we regard this centre as the CAPITAL of God's universe, the seat of His government, and from which all lines of material and spiritual activities proceed. And what a vista of glory it opens before us when we contemplate such a place as our future home, as eternal and immutable as Him whose throne it is, and Who has redeemed us by the blood of His Own Son, that we might be heirs with Him in Glory. Such is the sublime conception which many pious and deep thinking men have formed regarding the locality of Heaven, and in the light of the present and according to our limited human capacity of mind, it does not seem either repugnant to reason or derogatory to the infinite perfection of the all-wise Creator.

THE NATURE OF THE REDEEMED.

In the third place, regarding the nature of the redeemed, it may be said that they will have bodies glorious beyond anything of which we can possibly conceive in this life. They will, according to the Scriptures, have bodies "like unto Christ's glorious body."* They will have pure, refined, spiritual bodies in which no element of weakness, disease or decay will ever be found; bodies that we may reasonably conclude will be entirely free from the often tantalizing limitations of matter in this lower sphere, and that will bloom to all eternity with the strength and vigor of immortal youth. Thus, when our present bodies, which are now subject to death and its consequences on account of sin, are gloriously reconstructed by the hand of a loving and beneficent Creator, and re-animated by souls in which all the baser elements are eliminated and in which all the noble powers of the human nature and faculties are quickened and intensified, then will the child of God begin to realize the nature of that "Crown of Life," of which the risen glorified Saviour speaks. Of the nature of the Redeemed, previous to the resurrection, very little perhaps may be said with certainty, as we know almost nothing regarding the nature of purely spiritual existence. The Scriptures re-

*See Appendix.

present the spirits of the departed saints as going immediately at death to the highest heaven, which is distinctively the throne of the eternal One, where Jesus reigns and where angels and archangels have their proper and permanent abode. They are represented as living, moving, acting, cognizant of God's glory, exulting in rapturous praise at the thought of redeeming love, and waiting in earnest expectation the redemption of their bodies. Thus ever at death the Christian enters into his inheritance, though the full possession and enjoyment of it will only come when the glorified spirit is clothed with a body commensurate to its own immortal glory and perfection.

THE EMPLOYMENTS OF THE REDEEMED

In the fourth place and lastly, regarding the employment of the redeemed, it may be said that the Scriptures represent the saints in Heaven as living continually in an atmosphere of adoration, of praise and of service. The early ideals and conceptions of a future state, based upon imperfect and limited knowledge, were necessarily misty and unreal, and just as the full orb'd day is preceded by the twilight, so the advancing illumination of this distinctively Christian age was preceded by the diffused twilight of the world's childhood. The ancient pagans located their Elysian fields in some unknown and undefined region beyond the seas, and where in unrestrained freedom they hoped to revel in sensual delight. Even the spiritual longing of the chosen patriarch found expression in the simple and ill-defined desire to be "gathered to their people." The various Indian tribes think of Heaven as an ideal hunting ground where their favorite game is abundant and to which the "Great Spirit" will conduct them when they die. Their idea is immortalized in the beautiful language of the poet:

"Even the poor Indian, whose untutored mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind,
Whose soul proud science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk or milky way —
Yet simple nature to his hope has given,
Behind the cloud-capt hill, an humbler heaven :

Some safer world in depths of woods embraced,
Some happier island in the watery waste,
Where slaves once more their native land behold,
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold,—
And thinks, admitted to yon equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company.”—POPE.

Among civilized people perhaps the ideals of the Heavenly state are as various as the different inclinations and necessities of the individuals. The astronomer imagines that the saints in Heaven will derive their chief delight from studying and exploring the infinity of worlds that roll in space. The biologist will employ his Heaven born talents in studying life in its endless manifestations. The philosopher will unravel with never ending delight the mysteries that so perplexed him here. The historian will spend eternity in tracing out the history of the universe and its inhabitants. The musician will revel eternally in the harmonies of Heavenly music. To the tired Heaven will be a place of endless rest. To the poor it will be a place of plenty. To the sick it will be a place of health. To the sorrowful and despondent it will be a place of joy. Each fondly hopes that his own cherished desires will be gratified, and that his own peculiar hindrances will be removed and the idea seems entirely Scriptural and reasonable. But it is perhaps vain for us to speculate further regarding the nature of the Heavenly employment and about which, in the very nature of things, we can know so little. It is not un-Scriptural or unreasonable to suppose that as in ad-

dition to the service of praise and adoration which the saints will render to the ever blessed Trinity and the Holy communion and intercourse which they will enjoy with one another, they will be constantly engaged in active service, that, therefore, their sympathies and activities will go out to the inhabitants of outlying worlds, many of which may have violated the laws of God's moral government and which would deem a restoration of some kind necessary or probable. Let us conclude with the thought that Christ will be the chief source and centre of the Christian's delight in Heaven. . It will, also, doubtless be a source of supreme and perennial delight to the inhabitant of Heaven to meet and converse in terms of the most intimate fellowship and equality with friends, with angels and with all the great and good who have lived since the world began. Next to the society of the ever present and adorable Redeemer, I believe the chief source of the Christian's delight in Heaven will be the consciousness of his own eternal security, the beating within him of the pulses of immortal life.

When at the last the solemn ^{Call} ~~hour~~ shall come,
 To And wing my mystic flight to future worlds,
 I cheerfully will obey; there, with new powers,
 Will rising wonders sing. I cannot go
 Where universal love not smiles around,
 Sustaining all yon orbs and all their suns;
 From seeming evil still educing good,
 And better thence again, and better still,
 In infinite progression. But I lose
 Myself in Him, in Light Ineffable.
 Come then, expressive Silence, muse His praise.
 —THOMSON.

APPNDIX.

The idea that Christ went to Heaven with the self same body in which He tabernacled here upon earth is quite prevalent, and is fostered by theologians, who unduly emphasize the humanity of Jesus for meditation and devotional purposes. But the idea is unphilosophic and is supported rather by the sound than by the sense of Scripture. It is true that Christ died and was buried, but it is also true that according to the Scripture He saw no corruption. For this reason and for the added reason that it was necessary that the great fact of the resurrection, the central doctrine of the Christian system, and which was to be the rallying point for the Christian's faith as well as the ground work of his eternal hope, should be established beyond the possibility of cavil or doubt, therefore Christ rose from the tomb with his real corporal body, and of which fact he took pains to give his disciples the clearest and most unmistakable proof. It is true that he apparently ascended to Heaven with this body and that the angels certified his return "in like manner," but this was done, no doubt, in condescension for the weakness of the disciples, and the "in like manner" of the promise emphasizes more perhaps the fact of the return than the manner of it, as in the other Scriptural passages Christ is represented as coming in all the panoply of Heaven and with the swiftness and universality of lightning. It seems entirely reasonable and Scriptural, therefore, to conclude that Christ assumed His glorious body, and which is the earnest and promise of the Christian's spiritual body, at his ~~resurrection.~~

Ascension.

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