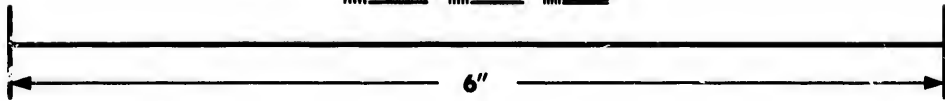
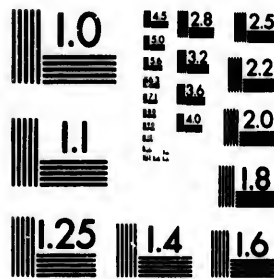


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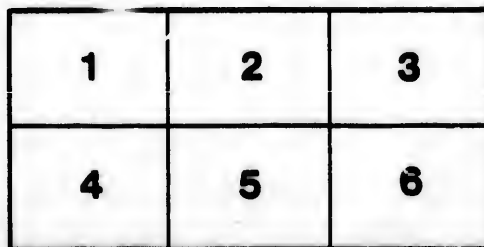
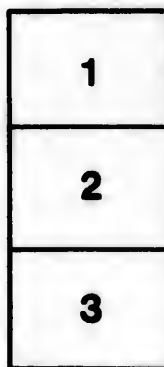
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MUSEUM

... IN HEAVEN,
OR
Thoughts for the Sinner in Solitude
and Sorrow.

—BY THE—

REV. E. WALLACE WAITS, B. A.,

PASTOR OF ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, CHATHAM, N. B.



CHATHAM, N. B.:
THE WORLD BOOK AND JOB PRINTING ESTABLISHMENT, WATER ST.
1882.

TO
THE MEMORY OF
MRS. WILLIAM MUIRHEAD,
TO WHOSE PIOUS AND LIFE-LONG ADMONITIONS,
COUNSELS AND EXAMPLE, ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH OWES,
UNDER GOD, MORE THAN WORDS CAN REPRESENT; AND ALSO
TO
THE HON. SENATOR MUIRHEAD,
AS AN EXPRESSION OF TENDER SYMPATHY,
AND WITH THE EARNEST HOPE OF ITS COMFORTING IN HIS
GREAT GRIEF AND SOLITUDE, THIS PAMPHLET, THE OFFERING
OF A FRIEND AND PASTOR'S LOVE, IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

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PREFACE.

The following pages form the substance of several discourses delivered on occasion of the visitation of God's providence by death to families connected with St. Andrew's congregation, Cnatham, N. B. Composed at intervals between the sick chamber and the study, the author cannot claim for them, nor will the reader expect that they should possess, the depth of a profound, or the grace of a finished, composition. But such as they are,—thoughts for the season of sorrow,—he presents them as a tribute of heartfelt sympathy to those who may be passing through a season of solitude and sadness.

Nothing need be added but to commend this humble effort to the blessing of Him, "without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy."

"Go, little book! from this my solitude;
I cast thee on the waters; go thy ways;
And if, as I believe, thy vein be good,
The world will find thee after many days.
Go, little book! in faith I send thee forth."

Southey.

ST. ANDREW'S MANSE,
Chatham, N. B.,
October 4th, 1882.

The wise shall inherit glory; but shame shall be the promotion of fools.—
Prov. III. 35.

“And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of Heaven from God.”—Rev. XXI. 10.

A home in Heaven! What a joyful thought,
As the poor man toils in his weary lot,
His heart oppressed, and by anguish driven,
From his home below to his home in Heaven.

A home in Heaven! As the sufferer lies
On his bed of pain and uplifts his eyes
To that bright home, what joy is given,
With the blessed thought of a home in Heaven.

A home in Heaven! When our treasures fade,
And our wealth and fame in the dust are laid.
When strength decays and our health is riven,
We are happy still with our home in Heaven.

A home in Heaven! When our friends have fled
To the cheerless gloom of the mould'ring dead,
We rest in hope on the promise given,
We shall meet up there in our home in Heaven.”

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CHAPTER I.

Heaven, the Metropolis of the Universe.

"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."—Rev. XXII. 14.

Every kingdom has its Metropolis—its political centre, the abode of its royalty, the place to which all its streams of wealth flow, and from whence its commerce, laws, and literature flow to remotest provinces. Heaven is the Metropolis of the Universe, the bright abode of God, the glorious centre of creation, and the place from whence the streams of His blessings ceaselessly flow to all worlds. It is the home of the good. All the noble and sainted men who once poured their light on this world, and whose memory is sweet among us yet, have met there in loving, visible, and eternal fellowship; and godly, earnest souls, now on earth everywhere, lend their steps towards its gates of light and endeavour to catch its divine harmony and inhale its quickening and sanctifying spirit. To it our purest aspirations always ascend, and our brightest hopes centre in it. We dwell with unutterable rapture on its king, its glory, and its life. The moral wealth and glory of all worlds flow into it as rivers do into the sea. It is the one city in the universe which the curse has not touched, and from which no sound of mourning and death has ever ascended in the countless ages of its history.

John, the banished Apostle—banished for the

testimony of God and the word of Jesus—had a glimpse of Heaven from his rocky home such as no mortal beside ever had. God always gives special revelations to those of His servants who are called to pass through special sufferings for His name's sake. They are never nearer Heaven than when they are walking through the depths of trouble. John on Patmos, severed from his associates, and hindered from preaching the gospel, had Heaven opened to him under the image of a magnificent city. Raised to an exceeding high mountain—carried in spirit to the purer and loftier heights of the universe—he saw it reposing in its uncreated splendour. Its shining streets, casting back the glory of a cloudless sky; its crystal river, unstained with a human tear; its massive walls, resting on foundations of costliest gems; its gleaming gates of pearl, opening towards every point of the compass, and its innumerable inhabitants walking in the light of the smile of the King—all were present to his eyes. And what he saw he has put on record for our instruction and encouragement. I ask you now to look away from this sinful earth—this clouded scene of your sorrows, conflicts, and trials—to that home of souls in which you are hoping to live through eternal ages.

“Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”

LET US CONSIDER THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD.

God has given commandments to man. They are the substance of the Bible. God's will is revealed in the natural world in actions. In the Bible His will is revealed in letters, syllables, and words. The Bible contains our rule of practice; it gives us a complete system of practical religion. Man requires a rule; a

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guide, that he may know and fulfil his duties towards God and man. It is designated "the law of the Lord," and the commands contained therein are binding upon man. Man is a *moral agent* and as such he has always been considered capable of performing *moral actions*; which are *voluntary* actions, having respect to some rule or law. And thus man is a fit subject of moral government, and has a capacity to appreciate these commands. A wonderful argument this for the native dignity of the soul.

Dr. Wayland says:—"It may be seen that there exists in the actions of men, an element which does not exist in the actions of brutes. Hence, though both are subjects of government, the government of the one should be constructed upon principles different from that of the other. We can operate on brutes only by fear of punishment and hope of reward. We can operate on man, not only in this manner, but, also, by an appeal to his consciousness of right and wrong, and by the use of such means as may improve his moral nature. Hence, all modes of punishment which treat men as we treat brutes, are as unphilosophical as they are thoughtless, cruel and vindictive. Such are those systems of criminal jurisprudence which have in view nothing more than the infliction of pain upon the offenders. The leading object of all such systems should be to reclaim the vicious. Such was the result to which all the investigations of Howard led. Such is the improvement which Prison Discipline Societies are laboring to effect." (See Wayland's Elements of Moral Science, page 9.)

God's commands are *authoritative in their import*. They are the commands of the highest possible authority, of that sovereign who possesses, in the highest and most exalted manner, a right to enact laws for the government of mankind. The law of God is

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so authoritative that it is the binding force of the universe, material and moral. It keeps in order alike the stars of heaven, and the angels before the throne. On all within and on all without is the inscription of Divine law. His authority to give commandments arises from Himself—from the glory of His majesty—the greatness of His nature—and the moral rectitude of His character. He is the standard of moral rectitude throughout the universe. It arises also from His being the creator, upholder and preserver of all things, all beings, all forces and all worlds. Law must emanate from Him. Man intuitively looks up to a moral standard; and what is that moral standard but God? See with what glory and authority God came down to Sinai and delivered the decalogue to Moses the great legislator of Israel. And when His prophets and Apostles come forth after having received the word from His mouth, with "thus saith the Lord," His commands are as binding as if you were to hear a voice from the excellent glory.

God's commands are also *reasonable in their demands*. We are aware that many think them unfriendly to their comfort. But this is a mistake; they forbid nothing but what must ultimately destroy all comfort; and enjoin nothing but what is really necessary to your happiness. The heavenly teacher has reduced all the demands which the Eternal Governor makes upon us to a two-fold command. (1) "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, &c.*" His demand is our supreme love. Is this demand reasonable? This depends upon three things. (a) Whether we have the power of loving anyone supremely. (b) Whether God has attributes adapted to awaken this love within us. (c) Whether these attributes are revealed with sufficient clearness to our minds. The affirmative to these things must be ad-

mitted by all. All men do love some object supremely. The Eternal has attributes suited to call forth the paramount affection. Nature and the Bible radiate those attributes in every variety of aspect and attraction. The heavenly teacher has reduced the demands to another command—(2) “*Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you.*” Not “whatsoever men do unto you;” that might be sinful; but whatsoever *ye would* that men should do unto you. Would you have them false, dishonest, unkind, tyrannic, toward you? Whatsoever ye would that they should be to you, be so to them. Can anything be more just and reasonable?

God’s commands *are easy to be understood.* The style of the Holy Scriptures, when the subject requires it, is wonderfully sublime. God, the human soul, the atonement of Christ, death, judgment, Heaven, hell, &c., are subjects which are grandly described and graphically portrayed. But while the most sublime imagery is employed to set forth these vital truths, there is a beauty, simplicity and instructiveness about them that imparts light to the darkest mind and elevation to the most degraded intellect. God’s commands are a revelation from the Infinite, shining as a ray of glory from the “Sun of Righteousness;”—there is no obscurity in it. Spoken as an oracle by the lips of the True Witness, there is no falsehood in it; set forth as the wisdom of the Infallible One, it is without ambiguity. The sun climbing the heavens in the early morning makes visible what was before wholly hid from view, or indistinctly seen under the feeble light of stars; so the commands of God clearly reveal what was before wholly unknown, or only dimly conjectured.

Interested men, in every age, have told the people that God’s commands are hard to understand. But

this is not the case, human language cannot make them plainer. "And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it." (Habakkuk ii. 2.) "They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge." (Prov. viii. 9.) "The way-faring man, though a fool, shall not err therein." "And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. iii. 15.) To understand them requires no great acuteness of judgment, no extraordinary depth of research, no intensity of application, no great power of penetration.

God's commands are *applicable unto all*. Before Him we all are equal in moral sense. We all came from the same dust, have all sinned, all stand in need of the same mercy, and are all placed under the same moral government. God is the moral governor of all rational beings that exist in the universe: men and devils, angels and principalities, thrones and dominions, are under His sovereign control, and must submit to His almighty authority. But our remarks must be understood as relating principally to man, and the government which God exercises over him in the present life. Every individual who duly considers the subject must be convinced that God, who is the creator of the universe, must be its moral governor; and we may also remark that every man seems to carry in his own heart evidence of this important fact. His nature and the laws of his being are so framed as to convince him that he is responsible to God for his conduct; and no man can readily throw off this conviction. I am aware that there are many who try to do so. *E. G.* Pharaoh said to Moses, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let

Israel go." But this assertion did not free Pharaoh from obligation to hearken to the voice of God. Man is a finite being, therefore he must receive law from the Infinite. Why can I not be independent of law? Simply because there cannot be two infinities; and where there is an infinite and a finite, the finite must receive its regulations from the infinite. This is a fact; the law is broadly marked upon every man, its great claims and requirements are strewn upon the whole expanse of society. Hence the commands extend to high and low, rich and poor, learned and illiterate, master and servant, mistress and maid; to parents and children, husbands and wives. To the king on his throne and the beggar on his rounds, to the nobleman in his mansion and the peasant in his cottage, to the philosopher in his study and the savage on his wilds, to the mariner crossing the ocean and the husbandman ploughing his field. To each climber of the steep and rugged path of honest labor. To each faithful servant of the Lord—from palace or from poorhouse—from cot or castle—who struggles in Almighty strength with the events and storms of life. Our security is in the universal application of law. You cannot get away from this principle; it lies at the very root of all individual discipline, it is the prime necessity of all social life. To this rule there are no distinctions, no restrictions, and no exceptions. "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another." (Romans ii. 14, 15.) But let us now consider—

THE OBEDIENCE REQUIRED. Not a legal obedience,

by which we merit eternal life. This is impossible, for we are sinners and have forfeited the favour of Jehovah, and "present for past could ne'er atone"—even had it been possible for us perfectly to keep the commandments of God. We are not in the same condition as Adam was in his primeval state; we do not start where he started. To him it was said,— "Do this, and thou shalt live." But Adam fell from his original righteousness, and the law provided for no failure on his part. What the law aimed at, it could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, through the depravity of human nature. Men sinned, and they became unrighteous in fact, and were treated as unrighteous by the government of God. They were brought into condemnation and they felt an impassable gulf between them and their Maker. The law could do nothing for them; it could neither rectify their errors nor reconcile them to God. Its bright flashes reveal to them their wickedness, and its rumbling thunders prophesy to them their doom. The more profoundly they felt their condition, the more profoundly they felt that by the deeds of the law no flesh living could be justified before God. Such is our condition as sinners in relation to law. "The likest thing to it in human experience is," says Dr. Chalmers, "when a decree of bankruptcy without a discharge has come forth on the man who has long struggled with his difficulties, and is now irrevocably sunk under the weight of them. There is an effectual drag laid upon this man's activity. The hand of diligence is forthwith slackened when all the fruits of diligence are thus liable to be seized upon, and that by a rightful claim of such magnitude as no possible strenuousness can meet or satisfy. The processes of business come to a stand, or are suspended when others are standing by ready to devour the proceeds

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of business so soon as they are realized, or at least to divert them from the use of the unhappy man and the good of his family. The spirit of industry dies within him, when he finds that he can neither make aught for himself, nor from the enormous mass of his obligations make any sensible advance towards his liberation. In these circumstances he loses all heart and all hope for exertion of any sort; and either breaks forth into recklessness or is chilled into inactivity by despair. And it is precisely so in the case of a sinner towards God. If he feels as he ought, he feels as if the mountains of his iniquities had separated him from his Maker. There is the barrier of an unsettled controversy between them, which, do his uttermost, he cannot move away; and the strong though secret power of this is a chief ingredient in the lethargy of nature. There is a haunting jealousy of God which keeps us at a distance from Him. There is the same willing forgetfulness of Him, that there is of any other painful or disquieting object of contemplation. God, when viewed singly as the Lawgiver, is also viewed as the Judge who must condemn, as the rightful creditor whose payments or whose penalties are alike overwhelming. We are glad to make our escape from all this dread and discouragement into the sweet oblivion of nature. The world becomes our hiding place from the Deity, and in despair of making good our eternity by our works, we work but for the interests of time; and because denizens of earth, we, estranged from the hopes of Heaven, never once set forth in good earnest upon its preparation."

At this point the provisions of the Gospel come in. What are they? We have them in the language of St. Paul: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin con-

demned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." We need a Saviour, and it is only on the grounds of His merits that we can be accepted of God, and at last reach glory. Faith in Christ is the means of bringing His own Spirit home to us, and giving us a new heart and a new life. This is the power to make men righteous—the power by which man obtains pardon for his past offences, and an effective influence enabling him to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. You clearly perceive that it is an obedience produced by the *grace of God*. God gives grace not to be turned into lasciviousness, but to enable us to do His commandments, and we are thereby laid under such obligations as no power can dispense with.

You should do His commandments *affectionately*. Love should be the principle. "If ye love me keep my commandments." You cannot love God until you know that He has first loved you—and you cannot know this until you have believed in Christ. "He that believeth not is condemned." "If any man love me, I will manifest myself unto him." "The Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved me." Where *love* is wanting, all is wanting; it is, so to speak, the faculty by which we apprehend God, without which we can never know more of Him than that He is a dread mystery. Love is the fulfilling of the law: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy strength." The obedience of love is not grievous, but cheerful, delightful, and active. "I delight to do thy will, O my God, for Thy law is within my heart." He who delights in the Divine law, loves it, not merely because it answers to his intuitions of moral propriety, nor merely because it is designed and fitted to yield happiness to

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all who obey it, but *mainly* because of the glorious character of its author. To delight in the law you must love the lawgiver. Supreme love to the great *Lawgiver* is the motive and inspiration to obedience. We will illustrate this:—There are two sons, children of the same father, living under the same roof, subject to the same domestic laws; one has lost all filial love, his father has no longer any hold upon his affections. The other is full of the sentiment, the filial instinct in him is almost passion. How different is the obedience of these two sons! The one does nothing but what is found in the command, and does that merely as a matter of form; he would not do it if he could help it. The other does it not because it is in the command, but because it is the wish of him he loves. He goes beyond the written law, he anticipates his father's will. Obedience is grievous in the one case, but delight in the other.

Love is the strongest force in the soul. If love pre-occupies the soul, temptations are powerless. No one can draw us astray unless he enlists in some degree our affections, and if our love be centered on God we are immovable. Love builds around the soul a rampart so invulnerable that the attacks of the enemy fall on it but to rebound. All the energies of the soul grow under its influence as nature under the sky of spring. It is the breath of God, the brightest purity, the atmosphere in which spirits revel in the vigor of undying youth.

“O Thou who keep'st the key of love,
 Open Thy fount, Eternal Dove,
 And overflow this heart of mine,
 Enlarging as it fills with Thee,
 Till in one blaze of charity
 Care and remorse are lost, like motes in light Divine.

Till as each moment wafts us higher,
 By every gush of pure desire,
 And high-breathed hopes of joys above,
 By every secret sigh we heave,
 Whole years of folly we outlive,
 In his unerring sight, who measures life by love."
 —Keble.

You should do His commandments *unreservedly*. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." To talk that you do not break this or that command is folly—or to break one under the pretence of keeping another. For unless you have respect unto all the commandments you may be assured that your obedience is not genuine. All the divine commands are established by the same authority. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all. (James ii. 10, 11.) Love is so essentially the basis of moral law that it is impossible to violate love without being an infringer of the whole law. Law is a chain that is dissolved by the loosening of one link. Hence it matters not what wrongs love, that wronging is the loosening of the link. All selfishness is antagonism to love, and every selfish act or habit is a rebellion against the whole law. There is a solidarity about this law that does not admit of its being broken in one part and yet kept in the whole. In its every point it expresses the same spirit, and so at the point that is disobeyed the common spirit of the whole is dishonoured. You must, therefore, if you would enter into life, like Zacharias and Elizabeth, walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. You must keep back no part of the price, nor divide between religion and the world. Men cannot have a little of religion and a little of self,—in other words, true men cannot combine pub-

lic profession and private self-gratification. Men are not permitted to make a mere convenience of Christ. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." There are too many persons in the present day trying to do this—they would like to have religion if they could have the world as well. But this cannot be. They—

"Contrive to suit frail nature's crazy case
And reconcile their lusts with saving grace,
By this, with nice precision of design,
Can draw upon life's map a zig-zag line,
That shows how far 'tis safe to follow sin,
And where their danger, and God's wrath begin."

You should do his commandments *constantly*. "To them who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life." (Rom. ii. 7.) "And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." (Gal. vi. 9.) Constancy is a very important element in this obedience. It must be an every-day work. The obedience of yesterday will not do for to-day, and that of to-day will not do for to-morrow. Some are very exact in their obedience when under any dark dispensations of Providence. Some when they are in the company of the righteous. Some when in the sanctuary, and on the Lord's day, assume the temporary appearance of obedient subjects. But "their goodness is as the morning cloud, and the early dew which passeth away." You must guard against this evil. At all times, in all companies, in all places, on all days, you must be obedient to God's will. Constancy is the condition of religious life, growth, strength, expansion, beauty, fragrance and fruitfulness, in every individual family and church. Meteors flash and darken again, but planets burn steadily in their orbits. There is a twilight that tends to noon-night, there is a twilight that ends in

noon-light. The evening twilight deepens into the darkness of midnight, the morning twilight broadens into the brightness of noonday. Hence, would we not only secure present but permanent well-being, our twilight must be the morning one. Our life must resemble the sun in his commencement, continued course, and consummation. We must travel onward and upward to "the perfect day" of knowledge, the perfect day of purity, and the perfect day of joy. The more we know of God the more steadfast and perfect should be our obedience to Him. We should go forward, conforming ourselves to His laws, with more care and exactness every day we live.

Never was constancy and fixedness of moral purpose more essential to progress than in the present day. Every tide of the ocean seems to import some new interpretation of theology; every breeze seems laden with refined error and mystic heresy. Know well your doctrines: be not decoyed by the *ignes fatui* of sham-philosophy, but fix your eye earnestly on the beacon-lights of divine and immutable truth! It is not great to be carried away in an ethereal and unintelligible transcendentalism. Truth is simple,—its cardinal principles are soon elicited and mastered,—it does not deck itself in the vainglorious habiliments of scholastic refinement, and utter the pretentious jargon of inflated pedantry; its garb is sublime as its own simplicity, and its speech as gentle and winning as a parent's love. Nothing will give the moral manhood of the Church such power as *constant* adherence to divine truth. Let the enemy once see that the Church is wavering, that it is exhibiting signs of decadence, and the day of ruin will quickly dawn! Such decision as we advocate, instead of being opposed to progress, is one of its essential conditions.

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lem. Man must still "*inquire in His temple.*" The eye opens continually on ever-widening realms of thought,—the imagination wings its imperial flight over regions of beauty,—the intellect is overpowered by the innumerable globes of truth which whirl their revolutions round the state-throne of the universe; progress is therefore the inspiring watchword of moral manhood: *Onward!* my brother, dive into the deepest waters of life's great sea. *Upward!* Sirs, where the air is balmy and the prospect wider. *Heavenward!* Christian pilgrim, there is thy abiding home.

THE BLESSEDNESS PROMISED. "Blessed are they," &c. They are happy while obeying. "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them." (Ps. cxix. 165.) "And the work of righteousness shall be peace: and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." (Isa. xxxii. 17.) But "they shall have a right to the tree of life," &c. *An authority founded on right:*—this *right* founded on obedience;—and this *obedience* produced by the *grace of God* working in them. The *tree of life* seems to be an allusion to the tree of life in the paradise of man. (Gen. ii. 9.) As this tree is stated to be in the *streets* of the city, and *on each side of the river*, tree must here be an *enallage* of the singular for the plural number, *trees of life*, or *trees* which yield fruit by which life is preserved. *Right to the tree of life*—to all the blessings signified by it. When Adam broke God's command he was driven from *the tree of life*. They who keep God's commandments "shall have a right," through his gracious covenant, to *the tree of life*.

The fruits of this tree are *abundant*. *Twelve manner of fruits*. Heaven's joys are so many that they cannot be numbered, so copious that they cannot be defined, so precious that they cannot be valued. *Every month*

—like the lemon tree, which ever and anon sendeth forth new lemons as soon as the former are fallen down with ripeness. Such plenty, that ripe fruits are yielded *every month*—so that all may freely partake of them at all seasons. As there is a great demand upon the resources of these trees, it might have been supposed, perhaps, that, according to the common method in which fruit is produced, there would be sometimes plenty and sometimes want; but the writer says not so, the supply is commensurate with the demand.

The fruits of this tree are *various*. The idea of variety may be taken from the phrase,—“twelve *manner* of fruits.” Barnes says the passage in its correct rendering will not admit of this. But the common interpretation of the passage at least suggests the thought; therefore, we avail ourselves of it. There will be variety in the occupations and joys of the heavenly state. It cannot be otherwise; for Heaven is not a stationary community, but a world of stupendous plans and schemes, and of mighty efforts for its own improvement. Its inhabitants are a society passing through successive stages of development. An eminent author says, “Celestial genius is always active to explore the great laws of creation, and the everlasting principles of the mind, to disclose the beautiful in the universe, and to discover the means by which every soul may be carried forwards.” And in Heaven the universe will be seen as one boundless sphere of discovery, in which the soul will eternally career, enlarge its capacities, and derive new and various sources of enjoyment.

The fruits of this tree are *continual*. There ever watered by living streams, under a brighter sun, and in a nobler soil, the trees bear fruit continually—*every month*. No failure! They are every month

richly laden with immortal fruit. The joys of Heaven stand in instructive contrast with the joys of earth. Man has his earthly inheritance, but it is *corruptible*—he seizes a joy from the hand of time, but it is *defiled*,—he plucks a flower from the coronal of spring, but lo! *it fadeth away!* You may have seen a bright-eyed child gathering the early primroses, and binding to it the young violet, and scampering home right cheerily with its prize of beauty; all day long the little wanderer has joyed over the simple treasure, and at night has carried it to rest,—in dreams the flowers have been gathered over again, and the heart of the dreamer has quickened its beat for very joy,—the morning has come, but alas! the primrose and the violet have drooped their heads to revive no more: blank amazement has marked the countenance of the child,—*his prize is gone!* Sirs! learn wisdom from the simple incident. How uncertain is health! The eye which now sparkles brightest with the fire of life may be soonest glazed in death. How fickle is friendship! A look, or a word thoughtlessly spoken, or a deed undesignedly performed, may change the friend of our bosom into our bitterest enemy. How transient are riches! They make to themselves wings and fly away. The wreath of fame, for which the student toils, the poet sings, the warrior fights and the statesman argues, withers before it is well bound round the winner's temples. Nay, the time is coming, fast as the revolving years can bring it on, when the present order of things will be broken up, and the great world itself, the scene of so many great events, shall pass away; but this city presented in the text, the bright centre of the universe, the abode of redeemed humanity, will continue firmly fixed on its immutable foundations for ever. And, let it be remembered, this city is not of yesterday. It is older than

earth's oldest, grayest city, older than the earth itself. Before ever our earth had been hung in its sphere, or time had begun its swift, pauseless march, or the first angel had commenced his song, it existed. It is from eternity. And when the last earthly city shall have fallen and faded into a dim memory of the past, this city will be as beautiful and stable as now, and will ring with the hymns of sanctified millions. Remotest eternity will see no dimming of its glory, no weakening of its foundations. Its spring is everlasting; its flowers are unwithering; its verdure is ever luxuriant and bright. Beautiful gardens of paradise! no wintry blast sweeps with desolating fury through its beautiful trees or over its fragrant flowers: no scorching sun burns up the shrivelled root—no pelting storm assails the tree of life! Amidst its amaranthine bowers there walks the *second* Adam awaiting the arrival of the *second* Eve, who is yet in the wilderness adorning herself with bridal purity and grandeur, and in due time she will be ready to meet her Lord, and walk with him through the unblighted groves of Paradise Regained! (Rev. xix. 7.)

The very *leaves* of the tree of life are *medicinal*. They are for the preserving of spiritual health. "They are for the healing of the nations."—*I. E.* For the *preserving*, not the *restoring*, of spiritual health; for no sickness or infirmity of mind or body is, or can be there: beneath the salutary shades of these trees no disease can ever invade any individual of the nations of the redeemed, but perpetual health shall exist and flourish in them all. This world, smitten with the blight of the curse, is full of disease. It is everywhere to be seen withering the beauty of youth and drying up the strength of manhood. But this city is a region of perfect and eternal health. There is health for souls in every breeze which fills its streets with music, in the light

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which beautifies its sky, and in all services the purified and emancipated spirit is called upon to perform. It is the home of eternal youth. Fancy has often sketched such a region in some sunny land of this world, and men, allured and fired by the dream, have grown old in seeking it, and have been sickened with disappointment mocking their dreams and snuffing their hopes into the dust. Men will never find it in this world; it is in Heaven. There eternities will come and go, and still leave the soul buoyant and vigorous, its mighty powers just opening out in the light of the morning of its eternal day, in the bright and genial spring of its eternal year. When more ages have gone than there are grains of sand on old ocean's shore, the soul will be just entering upon new realms of life, passing into the transforming light of a fuller vision of God. It will never know anything of the blight of disease, nor of the maiming of accident, nor of the infirmities of age. It is secure also from death. Here and now he mercilessly invades our families, our circles of friendship and our homes. He has moistened the earth with tears wept at his cruelties, and filled it with undying sounds of lamentation and woe; but he can never enter this city. Its soil has never yet been opened for a grave. No funeral knell has ever struck its sad tones on its sunny air, alarming its inhabitants with its message of bereavement and hearts torn asunder. No mourner clothed in the garb of sorrow has ever been seen in its streets. It is the seat, the centre and the home of life—free, boundless, everlasting life.

I would remind you, in conclusion, that the blessedness promised is *spiritual*. The imagery employed is evidently intended to set forth spiritual and not material things. We could have no clear ideas about Heaven without its being made known to us

through the medium of material things, which we can see and in some measure understand. The employment of material images to set forth spiritual things is one of the characteristics of the Bible. Heaven is pre-eminently the region of the spiritual. Its wealth and enjoyments are spiritual. Our views of it are often far too low and sensual. We dwell so much on the imagery employed to set it forth, that we lose sight of the great spiritual truths which lie beneath—we mistake the shadow for the substance. It is a kind of Persian paradise, a place of sensual delights, which our imagination pictures to us, rather than a Christian Heaven, whose characteristics are purity, spiritual freedom, and Christ-like love. When we reach that bright abode we shall have done with the material in the universe, as we now see it, for ever; we shall never again be clogged with its fetters, nor burdened with its infirmities. Spiritual wealth, consisting in knowledge, holiness, humility and love, is far higher than material or intellectual wealth. It makes a man rich in spite of his outward circumstances, and, though his home may be in the lowest quarter of the town, it lifts him to a place among the aristocracy of the moral universe.

Let us improve this subject—

By enquiry. There is a great deal of profession in the present day. Much talk about religion. But the question is not whether you talk about, or read, or understand God's commandments, but whether you do them. There are many who say "Lord, Lord, without doing the will of the Father which is in Heaven." Does your religion consist in mere mechanical acts, empty words, spiritless strains? Be assured if it has not taught you to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, your religion is vain. If ye know these things, happy are ye, if ye do them. "He that

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heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock." Christ's disciples should act consistently with their professions. There should be a perfect harmony between what they profess to be and what they are. Let creed and conduct be agreed, "live as becometh the Gospel of Christ." The discrepancy between the creed and the conduct of Christendom is at once amongst its greatest crimes and curses. Look into our own country as an example, and what do we see? The millions by profession calling Christ "Master and Lord," and yet in daily life denying His doctrines and disobeying His will. He denounces war, they practise it; He denounces worldliness, they practise it; He denounces selfishness, they practise it; He denounces subjection to the flesh, they practise it. Thus—

"With lip they call Him master,
In life oppose His word.
They every day deny Him,
And yet they call Him Lord.

"No more is their religion,
Like His, in soul or deed,
Than painted grain on canvas
Is like the living seed."

By encouragement. Ye servants of God who have another spirit in you, go on from strength to strength. The prize is before you—angels are waiting to bind the laurels about your brows. Fear not! Those who profess to know (but their works deny them) will call you legalist and puritan, and will do all they can to oppose you. But God is for you; therefore, my beloved brethren, fear not. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" He is faithful who hath promised to keep you unto the end. The

best banks of earth may break, and we may lose our all, the finest fortresses may be reduced to ruins, and our lives destroyed. But nothing can touch the Christian's wealth; nothing can hurt the Christian's life; for they are "hid with Christ in God." Christ says, "Because I live, ye shall live also." It is said that the natural sun once stood still; but we know of no one who can affirm that Christ, "the Sun of Righteousness," has ever failed, even in a single instance, to keep His promise. Did such a city as I have attempted to describe exist on earth, what a mighty exodus of the nations there would be to it! But though not on earth, there is such a city, and we are all invited to the privileges of citizenship. Here we have no continuing city, but let us seek that which is to come. Let us take our staff in hand, and shaking ourselves free from the delusions of earth, let us go forward towards its open gates. A glorious welcome awaits us there.

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"How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth?" "In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows are darkened, and the doors shall be shut in the streets."—Ecclesiastes xii. 3.

"And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.—1 Cor. xv. 49.

*"Like leaves on trees the race of man is found,
Now green in youth, now withering on the ground;
Another race the following spring supplies;
They fall successive, and successive rise:
So generations in their course decay;
So flourish these, when those are pass'd away."*

CHAPTER II.

The Christian's Burden and Desire.

Memorial Sermon Preached in St. Andrew's Church, Chatham,
on the Occasion of the Death of Mrs. J. McDougall.

"For we that are in this tabernacle do groan being burdened not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."—2 Cor. v. 4.

The doctrine of the resurrection is a doctrine of revelation, not of reason; pointing to its great preacher with undisguised contempt, the philosophical Athenians asked with a sneer, "What will this babbler say?" True, there is in the human breast a hope of immortality which leaps into life when evoked by the word of God. But, apart from the Gospel, all that unaided man could reach concerning that life beyond the grave was a feeble, fluttering guess. The tomb was covered with darkness. For many ages Christians loved to carve upon the stones that memorialized the dead the butterfly—the beautiful symbol of the resurrection. Once a creeping worm, it wove itself a shroud, and dropping on the earth found there a grave. But when spring returned, breaking away from its earthly covering, it rose into the air, in form and habits entirely new. Men, exalted by the Gospel, loved to trace in this an emblem of the resurrection of the body. It is no more than an emblem—a beautiful picture. It can never become an argument. The chrysalis never was dead. There was no gap in the existence such as occurs when the body

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committed to the grave crumbles and mingles with its native dust. Nature's most beautiful symbol fails to furnish the feeblest *proof* of the resurrection. The ancient heathen, gathering the ashes of his departed friend into the sepulchral urn, could only murmur the dark soliloquy, "Is this the sorry ending of all life's affection and purpose? Is the loved voice hushed for ever?"

"Fond man,

Behold thy pictured life; pass some few years
Thy flowery spring, thy ardent summer, thy
Sober autumn, fading into age, and
Pale, concluding winter comes at last
And shuts the scene."

No! not until we come to the Bible does the darkness of the grave flee away. Looking into the empty tomb of a risen and enthroned Redeemer—listening to the divine promise, "All that are in the grave shall hear the voice of the Son of God and shall come forth." Believing on Christ for a present and eternal salvation, so that in a soul risen from sin we have an earnest of a body risen from the grave—all doubt and hesitancy vanish. Casting the light of revelation beyond the veil we can joyfully exclaim, "*We know* that if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." It was by the contemplation of Heaven the Apostle was sustained to endure the trials of earth. When wave after wave of trouble broke over him, threatening to overwhelm him in despair, the hope of Heaven lifted his head up above the roaring sea. "Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." And it is well for all Christians sometimes to survey their future prospects. The survey will keep them from becoming weary in well-doing, and even render them more

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diligent in their labour of love; yea, it will cheer their adversity, buoy them up under troubles, raise them above the influence of temporal things, and fill their minds, while living and dying, with the most joyful and glorious anticipations. To possess the Apostle's hope, it is necessary that you live the Apostle's life. To grasp eagerly at material things—to have no deep thoughts of self or sin—to have no abiding principles of faith and hope and love—that is daily to walk under the condemnation of God, and at last to flutter out into darkness “where the worm dieth not.” But if you have taken Christ as your only trust—His love your only portion—then may you stand by the side of the great Apostle and claim the like consolation. Fighting the same foes, looking for the same Heaven, you may repeat the same confession:—

“Soon shall this earthly frame, dissolv'd,
In death and ruins lie;
But better mansions wait the just,
Prepar'd above the sky.

“An house eternal, built by God,
Shall lodge the holy mind;
When once those prison walls have fall'n
By which 'tis now confin'd.

“Hence, burden'd with a weight of clay,
We groan beneath the load,
Waiting the hour which sets us free,
And brings us home to God.

“We know, that when the soul, uncloth'd,
Shall from this body fly,
'Twill animate a purer frame
With life that cannot die.

"Such are the hopes that cheer the just ;
 These hopes their God hath given ;
 His spirit is the earnest now,
 And seals their souls for Heav'n.

"We walk by faith of joys to come,
 Faith grounded on His word ;
 But while this body is our home,
 "We mourn an absent Lord."

LET US CONSIDER THE CHRISTIAN'S PRESENT RESIDENCE. "This Tabernacle," or, as amplified in the first verse, "the earthly house of this tabernacle." *It is his physical structure.* The mind occupies the body. Holy Writ often speaks of the body as the soul's residence. For the body is to the soul what the dwelling is to the tenant. For the soul the body was first created, and in all its marvellous arrangements is adapted to the tenant within—to its will, its imagination, its memory. The eyes—the windows of the soul, while the eyelids, ever rising, ever falling, keep the living windows clean. The ears—like open porches, taking in the world's babbling speech. The hands—those versatile workers that build or plough, that paint or write, as the implement is put into their grasp. The tongue—the eloquent ambassador to tell forth the beating thoughts within. "The ivory palace of the skull"—where the soul makes her central abode. And this fabric—so "fearfully and wonderfully made"—is *not* the man, but the house in which the man dwells. Do what we will, we cannot save the tenement, but the tenant may be saved. Therefore does Christ meet every man in the pathway of this world with the startling question, "What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" The *soul* is the man. Trite as the remark may appear, how many live as though

the converse were true—that the body was the man! Their profession or business is not a sacred stewardship; it is a busy toil to supply the body's wants, nothing more. To the adornment of the body hours are devoted. At the least touch of pain the physician is summoned. When death approaches, directions are given as to the body's final resting place, whilst the deeper craving, and the keener pain, and the loftier destiny of the soul within, are unheeded and forgotten. I repeat it: the soul is the man. The body has no power to shape and mould your eternal future; the soul has the power. Cherish and shield it as you may, the body will die; the soul never dies. And though the body shall on the resurrection morning be restored, the soul will determine its character and destiny. What your soul is, your body will be forever.

This house is earthly. It is formed from the earth and drags the spirit, its tenant, down to the earth. Wonderful as is the architecture, the materials are but dust. From the earth the body first sprung; by the earth it is now sustained; to the earth it shall one day return. For the earth it is adapted: to engage in its pursuits, to perform its duties, to share its joys. Nowhere else in the universe, probably, can such a body be found. Not in Heaven; for the rush of glory and light would overpower its frail faculties. Not in hell, for what of dignity or beauty distinguish it now will have no existence there. It is an earthly house, and when the soul leaves the earth, the house is left behind. By the inclination we feel to the things of sense, we perceive that our body draws our spirit down to sublunary objects. "My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word." "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the

breath of life; and man became a living soul."

"Naked as from the earth we came,
And enter'd life at first;
Naked we to the earth return,
And mix with kindred dust."

Then the Apostle reminds us of the *uncertainty of its tenure!* "The earthly house of this tabernacle." A tabernacle or tent is a temporary dwelling, erected for shelter, when the stay is expected to be so short that a more substantial edifice would be too costly. A roof without a foundation, a few posts, a few cords, a few strips of canvas, it is quickly set up, quickly taken down again, easily torn or destroyed. The companion of travellers and soldiers, it speaks of a journey that may suddenly terminate, of a battle that must constantly be fought. Such is life to the Christian. Marching forward each day from the cradle to the grave, leaving old scenes, old companions, behind him, he has to fight at each step he advances. Sweeping back the hosts of hell, "fighting the good fight," he looks for the day when, the warfare finished, the tent shall be finally struck, and he shall pass into the "building of God, eternal in the heavens." "Yea, I think it meet, so long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance, knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me."

This house is decaying. The term "dissolve" means properly to disunite the parts of anything. As applied to a building, it denotes throwing down or destroying. When used, as here, in reference to the body, it signifies the dissolution of the body in the grave. The human frame gradually grows old, decomposes, and returns to earth. Seeing that the body is so perfect, why is it so frail? Doubtless it

is the noblest form into which God has fashioned matter; yet in longevity it is surpassed by the trees of the forest. More glorious than the stars, it is as fading as the summer flowers.

“Behold the emblem of thy state,
In flow'rs that bloom and die,
Or in the shadow's fleeting form,
That mocks the gazer's eye.”

A day's sickness, the touch of fever, the crashing of an accident, and it falls lifeless to the ground. Why is the body so feeble? *To teach us our dependence on God.* A stout healthy body, covering a stout sinful soul, would nourish a proud, self-reliant temper. The antediluvians found strength for their rebellion in the length of their lives. After the flood, God made the span of human life the shorter, that men might not err so vilely. Some of us would never think of God, of judgment, or of sin, unless through suffering in the body we were compelled to think. *To remind us this world is but our pilgrim home.* We build our nests firmly and strong, as though we were to live here always. God shakes them to pieces to prepare us for our future flight. We devote to the creature the soul's worship, which of right belongs alone to God. To deliver from idolatry God destroys the idols. When sermons and sacraments, Sabbaths and services have failed, in some little trial, some trailing sorrow, God teaches, “he builds too low who builds beneath the skies.” The first step towards the health of the soul has frequently been physical affliction. The grave of a child has been the treasure-house from which the bereaved parents have taken the “wealth without wings” that never flies away. Ah! my brethren, with a finished atonement, and an omnipotent spirit, and a universal gospel, it is diffi-

cult, sorely difficult, to get a sickly, dying world to Christ. Of a stout, healthy, undying world, we should utterly despair. *To quicken our desires for the permanent home.* When down the mountain side the storm rushes, beating the tent of the traveller to the earth, scattering the canvas to the winds—then, if not before, does there steal into the heart of the storm-beaten one a wistful desire for the fire-lit hearth and the fond faces of home. The tent trembles—disease weakens the body, accident lays it low in pain. The tent trembles, the arm falls weak at the side—the raven tresses are streaked with gray, the eyes grow dim, the ears become dull. O ye aged believers, ye dwellers on the slope of life, feeling in yourselves the approach of death, think of the home that awaits you! A home where the walls of jasper, and the gates of pearl, and the streets of gold will be surpassed by the glory of God, and the presence of Christ, and the companionship of loved ones gone before. In the prospect of that home rejoice!

“Heavenly home! heavenly home!
Precious name to me!
I love to think the time will come,
When I shall rest in thee.”

“I’ve no abiding city here;
I seek for one to come;
And though my pilgrimage be drear,
I know there’s rest at home.”

There is the pressure of trial in this tabernacle. “Being burdened.” My youthful friends will perhaps find it difficult to believe this is a description of their condition. Upon them the burden has not yet descended. Youth is joyous. The future is bright with hope, and if in the present tears come they are sudden and short as April showers. The gladness of a heart un-

burdened with care breaks forth in the dimpled laughter and sportive play. We would not have it otherwise, God has a purpose in that joy. The bud would not blossom into the fragrant flower without the influence of the sunshine. And the boy would not become the man if on his childish heart the cares of old age were laid. The spirit would be crushed and the body dwarfed. Let the gladness nestle within the child, but let it be wisely shielded by parental counsel and prayer. When the limb has grown strong for toil, and the heart brave to endure, then God brings the burden down—lightly at first, gradually it increases in its pressure, growing with his growth, a burden that can be shaken off only with the earthly house itself.

There are burdens Christians endure in common with all men. Family cares, when children sicken and die, or, more heavily still, when children turn their back on a father's God, and their follies pierce a mother's heart. Business perplexities—when markets are uncertain, when trade droops, when best-formed plans fail, and disaster falls on the conscientious tradesman. Burdens of false friends and busy tongues—when motives are misread and actions are misunderstood. Burdens of poverty, when the life is held in a ceaseless drudgery of toil, with scant time for rest or cultivation of the mind. There are many such burdens that make the supports of this earthly tabernacle to bend beneath their weight. But each trial, wisely used, is a friend as well. The heaviest burden of life has love—the love of an infinite Saviour—in the heart of it. "Cast thy burden on the Lord, and He shall sustain thee"—not thy burden only. Though dark adversities, or bitter sorrow, or death robed in blackest garb meet you, by all the might of His divinity, and all the mercy of His atonement, Christ

promises to carry you and your burden too.

“Am I drooping? Thou art near me,
Near to bear me on my way :
Am I pleading? Thou wilt hear me,
Hear and answer when I pray.”

“Then, O my soul, since God doth love thee
Faint not, droop not, do not fear ;
For though His Heaven is high above thee,
He himself is ever near !

“Near to watch thy wayward spirit,
Sometimes cold and careless grown ;
But likewise near with grace and merit,
All thy Saviour’s, thence thine own.”

There are burdens peculiar to Christians. Strange as it may seem, when sin is forgiven, it lies heaviest upon the heart. Guilt is upon the world, yet how madly it sports on the brink of death! From the believer in Christ, sin has been taken away in its guilt, and will one day be taken away in its defilement, yet how heavily the weakness of sin weighs on the Christian’s spirit. A tender conscience loathes its presence, and seeks to have it wholly cast out. Never did Paul speak of any suffering as he did of that which arose from his daily conflict with sin. See on Grecian plains two combatants meet for victory. Their hands clad in the nail-studded cestus, how warily they approach each other! Each motion of hand and foot is watched; now blow follows blow in swift succession, until one, with a sharp, sudden sweep of the mailed hand, strikes his opponent to the dust. And in that senseless, bleeding body see what Paul meant when he said, “I bruise my body, and bring it unto subjection.” O the fight with that inward sinful self is indeed terrible, as all can tell who wage it! Now pride holds us in her petulant grasp, and whispers we

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are wise already, so we lose the favored seat of Mary when she sat at the feet of Jesus and heard His words. Now sloth rocks us in her cradle to sleep, whilst golden hours go slipping by that might have been filled with holy service for Christ, or perhaps some sinful thought, swifter than a weaver's shuttle, passes to and fro, weaving a web that shuts out the light of God, and "we walk in darkness, because our deeds are evil!" How vigilantly must the watch and ward be kept lest we be utterly destroyed! The armour must never be doffed, and sword never be sheathed, the shield never be cast aside, but be constantly wielded against foes without, or turned against foes within. Who can wonder that at times we wish to escape from the burden of the conflict? I am not surprised that Dr. Watts once sang—

"Could I command the spacious land,
And the more boundless sea;
For one blest hour at Thy right hand
I'd give them both to Thee."

I am speaking to some who would gladly give more than that. Not land or sea, but *life* would some of you give if by laying it down you could at once gain Heaven. Were God to proffer the honours and glories of Heaven on the stern condition that we this day bade adieu to earth and all its joys, not a few would be found ready to make the exchange. Shelley said,

"I could sit down like a tired child,
And weep away this life of care."

"Life," said Charles Dickens, the great novelist, "seems to me the saddest dream that was ever dreamed." "*Vanitas vanitatum*"—such are the words with which Thackeray ended his most famous work. Luther, at one period of his life, cried, "I am weary

of life: if this can be called life, there is nothing much worse; I am utterly weary; I pray thee, O Lord, come forth and carry me hence." And Cowper in pensive sadness prayed—

"Oh, for a lodge in some vast wilderness,
Some boundless contiguity of shade,
Where rumour of oppression and deceit,
Of unsuccessful or successful war,
Might never reach me more."

The old historian said that no man had ever lived yet without coming to the day in his life when he cared nothing if he were to see no to-morrow.

But not thus, dear brethren, can you reach your rest. Step by step you must fight your way there—rising sadder but wiser from painful falls; finding real foes in fancied friends; curbing evil tempers; watching against besetting sins: thus only can you reach the Kingdom of God. And he that enters upon that war will understand the Apostle's lament, "We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened." *Are you tired of this world?* It is a sad thing when man becomes really tired of earth and earth's duties. Weary and sometimes irksome as they are, we should gather strength to encounter the task. Yours is no conqueror's heart if you quail in the presence of hard labour. Do not imagine that the meaning of the expression "heavenly-minded" is being too holy to do the cold severe work of this planet. Such "heavenly-mindedness" would soon loosen the moral securities of the world, and plunge society into the heathenism of the dark ages. It is sentimentalism; a maudlin, half-hearted existence; part of the man is in Heaven and part of him on the earth. He is not a robust hero in the race or fight, but a dizzy-headed dreamer resting himself on the pillow of self-ease.

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The Bible does not hold out Heaven as an inducement to cease from earth-work, nor as a prize to be seized unconditionally. My brother! are you talking so much about the joys of Heaven as to overlook the duties of earth? Is it your highest wish to enter Heaven yourself, and to leave your fellow-creatures to do the best they can for themselves? Is there no moral work to be done before you enter on your promised rest? Have you not to dive under the black rocks of sin and ignorance to lift up some poor lost one? Is there no prodigal to reclaim—no wanderer to woo—no aching heart to comfort—no grief-deluge to assuage? We must work till the last moment of our earthly sojourn, if we would really enjoy the rest of Heaven. We must add *labour* to hope, and *patience* to faith. It is in this fashion that we prove the practical value of Christianity. Men talk as though religion was only intended for higher worlds and serener climes than ours. It is a grievous and misleading creed. Religion can mingle her songs with the wintry tempests of disappointment and suffering, and she can do her work on the hard rocks and desert places of the world. Do not then forget present duty however difficult, nor shrink from the next struggle however formidable! You may be maimed in the strife; be it so: it is better having one hand to enter into Heaven than possessing both to be turned into hell. When the warriors return from battle, who is it that is praised and honoured? Is it he who has been poetizing on the glories of the conflict, or uttering sighs of pity over the dead and the dying? No. Look at that poor, shattered soldier who has mingled in the hottest strife and shed his blood for his country's cause: he it is who is greeted on his native shore with tears of sympathy and thunders of applause. So shall it be mor-

ally. Those who have passed their lives in sentimental quietude may "*hardly enter the kingdom of Heaven,*" but those who have struggled, bled and triumphed shall have an "abundant entrance" amid the acclaims of the blest, into the "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

WE HAVE HERE THE CHRISTIAN'S FUTURE RESIDENCE. The saint's future building will be the resurrection body. "We have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." The redeemed soul's final domicile will be the clay tenement in its changed and beautified condition. You have an exquisite description of it in the fifteenth chapter of Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians. It is there shown that the natural, weak, corruptible and dishonoured body deposited in the tomb, shall be raised a spiritual, strong, incorruptible and glorified body. The godly man's future dwelling will be the very opposite of his present one. Doubtless it will be in every respect more in keeping with his views and feelings, and more thoroughly adapted to his immortal spirit. The glorification of the body is a part of God's original purpose; and the Gospel is a perfect remedial scheme. It restores all the blessings that were lost in the first Adam. Originating in the boundless love of God, it comprises a complete salvation for man, and provides for removing entirely the curse and effects of sin from all those who accept its blessings, and for fulfilling in their final destiny the original purposes of Divine benevolence. Now, as the curse of sin affects man's physical as well as his spiritual nature, it seems reasonable to suppose that if the Gospel be a complete remedy for man it will ultimately remove the curse from his body, as well as from his soul; and hence it may be predicated that the resurrection and glorification of

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the body must follow as an effect of the perfection and completeness of the Gospel remedy.

The immortality of the soul has been held with more or less tenacity by the popular mind in all ages, and heathen philosophers have elaborated arguments to give the doctrine a scientific and logical basis ; but for want of a more solid foundation, and a more authoritative oracle than human reason, their conclusions had not sufficient force to sustain their own confidence; and a future existence was with them, after all, a subject of wavering speculation rather than of solid conviction. But of the resurrection of the body, the most penetrating and sagacious minds seem to have had no conception as a thing probable or possible. Though the shades and names of the dead frequently flit before us in the mythologies of the heathen, in the reveries of their poets, and the speculations of their philosophers ; and though various systems of metempsychosis had been propagated, we search in vain among the records of pagan literature and religion for the least trace of the body's resurrection. All their hopes respecting the body were entombed in the gloomy sepulchre, or expired at the funeral pyre. Often, when the body fell into the arms of death, affection embalmed it with odorous gums, or preserved its ashes in the sacred urn, or perpetuated its form in marble and bronze ; but no expectation of its return to life, and its reunion with the immortal spirit, ever soothed the bosom of the bereaved, or cheered the moments of the dying in the heathen world. A darkness covered the grave, unrelieved by the faintest ray. The farewell, at death, was final, and for ever. Some of you may have seen in one of the exhibitions of paintings the delineation of a funeral procession from the steps of the Columnaria at Rome. There was not one redeeming fea-

ture to relieve the sadness of the scene. There was not a single thing to indicate that one ray of hope had pierced the gloom of the mourner's heart. One almost fancied, as he looked at it, that he heard the shriek of the despairing widow, "*Vale! vale! Eternum vale!*"—"Farewell, farewell; eternal farewell." Thank God, the Christ has come since then. Yes, our Saviour, Jesus Christ, has brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel. He went into the grave and passed out at the farther end, leaving the door there for ever open; and so that which to the pagan was a dreary cave with no possible outlet, is for us and for our loved ones only a tunnel through which we pass to glory, changing the mortal for the immortal, the corruptible for the incorruptible, on the way.

"I know that my Redeemer lives;
 What comfort this assurance gives!
 He lives, He lives, who once was dead;
 He lives, my ever-living Head.

"He lives, triumphant from the grave,
 He lives eternally to save,
 He lives all glorious in the sky,
 He lives exalted there on high.

"He lives, all glory to His name!
 He lives, my Jesus, still the same;
 Oh the sweet joy the assurance gives,
 I know that my Redeemer lives!"

In the volume of revelation, this doctrine has a conspicuous place, and appears even amid the shadows of the patriarchal dispensation. The translation of Enoch was a glorification of man's whole nature, and a confirmation of a truth which had probably a place in the earliest revelation given to man. Job, though a Gentile by birth, and probably a contemporary with


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the later Jewish patriarchs, could exult amid the anguish of a diseased and emaciated body, and the desolation of all his earthly hopes, in prospect of a glorious resurrection, exclaiming, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." Isaiah, addressing the Jewish Church in the midst of her afflictions and calamities, comforts her with the hope of a resurrection to everlasting life: "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." Daniel, anticipating the closing events of time, and the final destiny of men, says, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Sustained by this hope, the Hebrew worthies endured with fortitude and joy the tortures of martyrdom, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. In the time of our Lord's ministry, the doctrine of the resurrection was one of popular belief. Martha only gave utterance to the prevalent sentiment when she said to our Lord, concerning her departed brother, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." In the New Testament this doctrine, freed from every vestige of obscurity, stands out with constant prominence, both in the teachings of our Lord and His Apostles. Says the Redeemer to the disconsolate sisters of Lazarus: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth

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and believeth in me shall never die." And again, He says, "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." The Apostles proclaimed this doctrine with the same constancy that they declared any vital truth of Christianity. They preached Jesus and the resurrection, and the one theme was inseparable from the other. Their oral ministry and their inspired epistles beam with the glad tidings of a resurrection, and manifest the solemn importance in which it was held by them. When enforcing great practical truths they open the solemn realities of a future world, declaring that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust. When attesting the efficacy and power of the Redeemer's atoning death, they declare its potency in abolishing death, as well as in crushing him that had the power of death, even the devil. In asserting the fact of our Lord's resurrection, they adduce it as an evidence and a prototype of our resurrection, and regard the general resurrection as an event so certainly connected with the resurrection of our Lord, that to deny it was in effect to deny that our Lord himself had risen from the tomb, and thus to undermine the whole Christian fabric. "For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ risen: and if Christ be not risen, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." (See 1 Corinthians xv. 12—22.) Such is the clear and explicit form in which this doctrine is revealed in the sacred volume; such is the solid foundation of the believer's hope.



The present objections of modern unbelievers are grounded on the dissolution of the body, and the subsequent assimilation and transmutation of its particles. It is alleged that, immediately after death, the human body, like all other inanimate substances, is subjected to the laws of chemistry, and its component particles become resolved into their primitive elements or constituent gases. Let this objection have its full force, but it proves not the impossibility of the resurrection, because—*Decomposition is not annihilation*. If it were, then the objection would have weight, at least against the restoration of the same body; but so far as scientific tests can be applied in the examination of matter, it is found incapable of annihilation under any process to which it is subjected. *Neither does the dissolution of a body involve the impossibility of the recombination of its parts*. As all the parts of the whole still exist, they may be reunited. *The fact that the particles of a human body after death become scattered, can present no difficulty with God, simply because He is God, and, therefore, has both wisdom and power to execute the purposes of His will*. Because God is omniscient He knows where they are; and because He is omnipresent, they are under His control. His eye is on every part of His work, and the smallest atom as well as the largest globe, is equally under His notice—nothing can escape His observation. Jehovah is also infinite in power as well as in knowledge, and, therefore, while nothing can be too diminutive or complicated for Him to know, nothing can be too hard for Him to do. Did He at first create it, and create the atoms, too, out of which it was formed, and can He not fashion it again out of the materials made already to His hand? Reason says He can, and Holy Scripture says He will; and folly herself may be ashamed to

doubt His ability. Those who object do greatly err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.

But the Apostle, in the passage under consideration, says, "Not for that we would be unclothed." He drops the figure of a tent for that of a garment. The abrupt transition may be accounted for by remembering his occupation. To a tent maker, the Cilician haircloth would equally suggest the idea of a tent and a vesture, for it was capable of being applied to both uses. To be unclothed is to die. "Not for that we would be unclothed." Even Paul, burdened with a worn-out body, prematurely old through the sufferings he had endured, knowing that a crown of righteousness awaited him in Heaven, even he shrinks from the dissolution of the body. For that frank confession I admire the Apostle. Generally there is such a grandeur about the man, that we find it difficult to realize he was one like to ourselves. He stands on the deck of a sinking ship, tossed on a roaring sea, his cheek alone unblanched by fear. He stoops beneath a dungeon doorway to wake the prisoners at midnight with his song. Fettered, a prisoner at the bar, he makes the judge tremble before his terrible appeal. But now Paul lets us into his inmost heart. Speaking as freely and as frankly as we do, or ought to do, in our communion, one with another, he tells us that to him death was not a pleasant thing. As we listen to his confession, we too can tell how oft we wish we could thus reach Heaven: "Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon." Christians love life. The body is beautiful, and death separates from it. In common with men who do not know the Saviour, Christians love the bright blue sky, the song of birds, the undulating landscape, the society of friends, the shelter of home, the sleep of night, the cheerful faces of the

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family circle. It is a mischievous error to suppose that religion postpones real joy to beyond the grave. With a deeper and more intelligent joy than worldly men know do Christians pass along the path of life, for to them each object is touched and hallowed by the merciful hand of a Father God. Christians love life also for the occasions it furnishes for working for Christ. Once I heard a Christian say, "It matters little whether I die now or ten years hence, I hope I am trusting in Christ alone for salvation." What! Does it not matter whether or not we have ten more years in which to discipline ourselves and grow the riper for Heaven—ten more years in which we may labour to point sinners to the cross, and rescue souls from ruin—ten more years of ceaseless endeavour to do good and increase the glory of our final reward? Yes, it does matter. Christians love life, because it is a field of labour in which they may work for the Saviour.

Moreover, death is an awful evil, from which even Christians sometimes shrink. It was a frequent utterance of Dr. Conyers, we are told, "I am not afraid of death, but I am afraid of dying." To be down in pain, to count the slow creeping hours and wish for evening dusk or morning dawn, to grow confused, to find familiar faces fading in the distance, to be carried out from the home of many joys and laid under the turf. To drop into oblivion, and, ere the headstone has crumbled, to be forgotten; say what men will, it is a solemn, awful thing to die. I do not know how you can calmly think of it whilst you live unrepentant and unbelieving. I wonder you do not tremble at the thought that one day you will have to tread the solitary pathway up to the throne of God, and stand with all your sins upon you before that omniscient eye. What imagination can picture the

overwhelming prodigies connected with this day?

"Whilst withering from the vaults of night,
The stars will pale their feeble light."

I beseech you, put away your sin. Bow your knees in prayer. Cast yourselves on the atoning sacrifice of Christ. With strong crying and tears seek the pardon of your sin, and rest not until you have obtained it, or death to you will be a tremendous curse. Is Christ your Saviour? Then why should you yield to nature's shrinking from the thought of death! Dying strength is not given until the dying day. Think that one tomb in the history of earth has been found empty, and give thanks for all that empty grave implies—sin's penalty endured, a risen and now glorified Saviour. Think of the promise of Christ, most fulfilled in the hour of death, "Fear not, for I am with thee." But, Lord, the stream is deep and dark and chill. "Be not afraid; when thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee: for I am thy God, thy Saviour."

"Jesus can make a dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are,
While on His breast I lean my head,
And breathe my life out sweetly there."

From the expression, "clothed upon," it would almost appear that Paul scarcely expected to die. The wish, at times, rose into a hope that he should be of those who would be alive at the coming of Christ. Hence the hypothetical form of the first verse: "If the earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved." Hence his words in another epistle: "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." At a later period he seems to have obtain-

ed fuller views respecting the coming of Christ, and he wrote to Timothy, "I am ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand." But at present his hope is, not to die, but to be able in his upward flight to meet Christ in the air. He did not wish to be unclothed by death, but "clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life," as gently as the day swallows up the dawn. Very remarkable is it, that in the whole of the epistles to the early Christian churches I cannot find one exhortation to prepare for death. At a period when martyrs not a few had perished, and many had "fallen on sleep," the constant note sounded was not prepare for death, but prepare for the coming of the Lord. "Stablish your hearts, unblameable in holiness at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." "Be patient, brethren, to the coming of the Lord." "What manner of persons ought ye to be, looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God." Ought we not look for the day when He, who shall come, will come? "Yet a little while:" long it looks to us with our petty cares and little turmoils. The centuries go wearily by. Generations are laid to rest. The Church is still weak in the world. But to Him who sits in the heavens it is a little while. Suddenly will the day of His coming break. From the ledger the merchant shall lift up his head to look on a grander account. From his desk the student shall turn to a light before which problems and mysteries shall vanish. From the altar the bride shall go to look upon a grander bridal than ever earth had seen: for the end of the world is the Church's marriage day, when the Lord shall take home his bride. Seeing that Christ will come, how ought you to make your plans, to deny yourselves, to live a holy life from day to day. Then if you are ready for the Lord's coming,

should death be your lot, you will be ready for that also. He who is prepared for the archangel's voice, the trumpet of judgment, will not be found unprepared if the summons come in a gentler tone. If you can meet Christ amid the thunders and flames of an expiring world, you will be able joyfully to meet Christ should he come to you in the quiet chamber, where soft hands smooth the pillow and wipe away nature's last bitter tear. Clothed upon or unclothed, Christ will be your sure defence.

"That mortality might be swallowed up of life." We can only see one side of a Christian's death—the setting on earth, the expiring breath, the vanishing life, the still cool chamber. We cannot see the rising on the other side—the angel convoy, Heaven's open gate, the Saviour's welcome of the rapt spirit. Yet none the less is it real. Death to the Christian is a birth into life—a life more sweet, more calm, more pure than could be realized on earth. Nor is the body forgotten. In the quiet cemetery we lay the dead one. "Dust to dust, ashes to ashes." The world in its pleasure and business sweeps by and thinks not of the sleepers lying there. But God forgets not. Over the side of the ships at sea the dead form plunges, and it sinks to rest in the depths below. The ships sail merrily on, and few dream of the silent sleepers far, far below. But God forgets them not. Marble vault and crypt do not more sacredly guard the remains of royalty than do the deep, deep sea and the dark cold earth cherish the dust of God's faithful ones. So, mourner, dry thy tears. The devourer shall be devoured. The resurrection shall restore to you all that death snatched away. And then, oh! joyous hope, "death shall be swallowed up of life."

Just for a moment consider the succeeding verse: "Now He that hath wrought us for the self-same

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thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the spirit." Have you the earnest of this heavenly life? Has God wrought in you, pardoning your sins, sanctifying your nature? If not, upon yourself the guilt of forfeiture lies. Often has God prompted your conscience to speak. Often has the Holy Spirit moved upon your heart, and you have felt that salvation was within your reach if you chose to accept it. Everyone that wishes to possess the "building of God," must be meetened for it; and there is no way of securing the necessary meetness but by penitentially and believingly yielding himself up to the Father through Jesus Christ. To those who will not come to Christ the converse of St. Paul's words will apply. Death will be swallowed up in a deeper death—the banishment of the soul from God into blackness and darkness for ever and ever. Can you be content to live on from day to day, from year to year, imperilling your soul, insensible to a Saviour's infinite love—rendering your personal salvation less and less probable? Turn to the Saviour now: live a life of faith on the Son of God. He will redeem your spirit from sin, and your body from the grave.

You will doubtless see the application of this subject to the present occasion. This morning we meet to do honour to the memory of one of the oldest and most respected members of this congregation, Mrs. McDougall, relict of the late John McDougall, Esq., who was born July 13th, 1810, in the Town of Strontian, Invernesshire, Scotland. Mr. McDougall came to this country soon after he was united in marriage to the subject of this sketch; and they first settled in Pictou, N. S. Thence they removed to Newcastle, and there, for five years, he was engaged in teaching, during which time they were both active members of St. James' Church. On removing to Chatham,

they identified themselves with St. Andrew's congregation, in its infant days. Mr. McDougall being a successful business man, and of deep and ardent piety, as well as a staunch Presbyterian, the church found a liberal supporter, and a true friend in him. He was ordained an Elder during the incumbency of the Rev. Mr. Archibald, and served in that capacity until his decease, about sixteen years ago. Mrs. McDougall's interest in the welfare of the church continued through the whole of her widowhood; and her zeal in every good work was unabated to the last hour of life. She was a lady of rare excellence, and great public spirit. Adorned with the beauty of holiness she was kept unspotted from the world. The influence of a godly home and regular attendance upon a Presbyterian ministry, in all probability led to that entire consecration to God which influenced her whole life. Her reputation was never sullied in the least degree. Everywhere and always she was the loyal servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, the large hearted lover of mankind, the sympathizing friend of the poor, the sick and the bereaved. The young and the old, the rich and poor, regarded her with reverence and affection. When I visited her last Saturday week (June 3rd, 1882), on my return from the Synod, she was glad to see me, and enquired when I came home. She was then patiently waiting for the call of the Master. Her expressions were calm and confident and characteristic of the person. She assured me all was well. She felt confident she would soon be where the weary are for ever at rest. On Sunday morning, June 4th, in perfect consciousness and assurance of immortality, this blessed servant of Christ woke up to everlasting life.

"Gone beyond the darksome river ;
 Only left us by the way ;
 Gone beyond the night forever ;
 Only gone to endless day !
 Gone to meet the angel faces,
 Where our lovely treasures are ;
 Gone awhile from our embraces,—
 Gone within the gates ajar !

"There's a sister, there's a brother,
 Where our lovely treasures are ;
 There's a father, there's a mother,
 Gone within the gates ajar.

"Gone are they, they go before us ;
 They are fading like the dew ;
 But we know they're watching o'er us,
 They the good, the fair, the true !
 They are waiting for us, only
 Where no pain can ever mar ;
 Little ones who left us lonely,
 Watch us through the gates ajar.

"Gone where every eye is tearless,
 Only gone from earthly care :
 O, the waiting, sad and cheerless,
 Till we meet our loved ones there !
 Sweet the rest from all our roving,
 Land of light and hope afar !
 Lo ! our Father's hand so loving
 Sets the pearly gates ajar !"

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"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."—John xii. 32.

"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.—Is. lv. 6.



*"The cross ! it takes our guilt away ;
It holds the fainting spirit up ;
It cheers with hope the gloomy day,
And sweetens every bitter cup.*

*"It makes the coward spirit brave,
And nerves the feeble arm for fight ;
It takes the terror from the grave,
And gilds the bed of death with light.*

*"The balm of life, the cure of woe,
The measure and the pledge of love,
The sinner's refuge here below,
The angel's theme in Heaven above."*

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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

penitent man ever approached God on the side of His *justice*. Can the insolvent debtor appeal to the *equity* of his creditors with any rational hope of being absolved from his obligation? Such an appeal would betoken moral insensibility or intellectual obtuseness. The only hope of guilt is in mercy. Failing there, it fails entirely: if mercy should give way, the dependent criminal must fall into the abyss of hell.

There is zeal for the other's salvation. He "answering rebuked him," and sought to convince him of his sins. The Psalmist says, "Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways." Mark the connexion between true personal conviction, and true world-wide benevolence! This is how true conversion operates. When man has received benefits immediately from God, his first impulses are intensely grateful; he must evangelize; the good news of his own pardon must be told to all who come within the sphere of his influence; he would bring others to the altar at which he met his Heavenly Father and received messages of moral conviction: hence no regenerate man can be careless respecting the spiritual interests of those by whom he is surrounded.

There is admiration of Christ's purity and innocence. "This man hath done nothing amiss." I am a sinful man; all punishment that comes down upon me is richly deserved; but this man is pure and righteous. He is the "Holy One, and the Just." The most ingenious and eloquent sceptic of our times, in the last line of his book, all of which denounces Christ, says, "All ages must proclaim that among the sons of men there is none greater than Jesus;" and this most notorious criminal on the cross, in his last words, says, "This man hath done nothing amiss."

There is here also a confession of Christ before men. The other reviled him; the penitent thief declared

"He hath done nothing amiss." In the Sanhedrim they decreed that He was worthy of death. The dying thief testifies, "He hath done nothing amiss." Pilate sentenced him to the scourge and the cross. The dying thief confessed, "He hath done nothing amiss." The multitude cried, "Not this man, but Barabbas."

"To us our own Barabbas give,
Away with him—they loudly cry—
Away with him,—not fit to live,—
The vile seducer crucify."

The dying thief cried, "He hath done nothing amiss." He was dying as a malefactor on the accursed tree, and yet the penitent thief acknowledges, "He hath done nothing amiss."

Next we see *his faith*. He turns to Christ and says, Lord, they are crucifying Thee as a criminal, but Thou art the Lord. Thou art even now in the arms of death, and yet Thou art the Lord. "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." What Faith! What a confession! A king! where is His throne? That cross. A king! where is His sceptre? The hand that wields it is nailed to the tree. A king! where is His crown? That wreath of thorns. A king! where are His subjects? A mocking multitude, a reviling crowd. A king! where is His power? A helpless sufferer, a dying victim. Yet for all Thou art a king, and "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." One does not exactly know by what steps or through what process this poor dying thief passed, which issued in faith—whether it was an impression from Christ's presence, whether it was that he had ever heard anything about Him before, or whether it was only that the wisdom which dwells with death was beginning to clear his eyes as life ebbed away. But however he

came to the conviction, mark what it was that he believed and expressed,—he recognizes in Jesus the King of the Spiritual world. How much he did know—whether he knew all the depth of what he was saying, when he said, “Lord!” is a question that we cannot answer; whether he understood what the “Kingdom” was that he was expecting, is a question that we cannot solve; but this is clear—the intellectual part of faith may be dark and doubtful, but the moral and emotional part of it is manifest and plain. Faith has in it the recognition of the certainty and the justice of a judgment that is coming down crashing upon every human head; and then from the midst of these fears and sorrows, and the tempest of that great darkness, there rises up in the night of terror, the shining of one perhaps pale, quivering, distant, but divinely given hope, “My Saviour! my Saviour! He is righteous. He has died—He lives! I will stay no longer; I will cast myself upon Him!”

We see also his *humility*. Remember ME. This is all I ask. If my Lord will then but think of me, it is enough. Just as Joseph in the prison asked to be remembered by the butler when it should be well with him in Pharaoh’s court. The penitent’s vague prayer is answered, and over answered. He asks, “When thou comest”—whensoever that may be—“remember me.” I shall stand afar off; do not let me be utterly forgotten. Sinner, it is enough for thee. That thy Lord remembers thee in Heaven, is all that thou requirest. He is pleading for you; your names are written upon the palms of His hands. Some may think that the more earnest a suppliant is the more he will ask for. Hardly so. Instance the beggar who demands bread to save himself from immediate starvation. The prayer of the wife of Zebedee, if

ffered by this man, would not have proved the existence of any deep yearnings for mercy. Was the Magdalene in earnest? The Syrophenician? The Galilean? Even more so the man who asks—not a throne—not even a place—but merely that the Saviour will cast back a passing thought to the poor wretch who perished at his side.

How many the wonders of the Crucifixion! Darkness covered the earth, the rocks were rent, the dead arose. How much greater this miracle of grace, when this dead soul arose to spiritual life, when darkness was dispelled from this benighted mind, and the heart of rock was changed to flesh.

Christ's reply next claims attention. He turns to the dying thief. The penitent did not cry in vain. The Lord forgot His dying agony in His love for dying souls. "Verily I say unto thee." Verily. The dying thief had spoken no doubt in trembling tones. Christ dispels every doubt as he answers with the voice of God. "Verily I say unto thee." The dying thief had addressed Him as King. He acknowledges the title. "Verily I," the great "I am." He had spoken directly to Christ. Christ speaks directly to him, Verily I say unto *thee*. Christ answers—Remember *thee*! thou shalt be *with Me*, close to my side. Remember thee when I come! *this day* shalt thou be with Me. Sinner! He speaks as directly and individually to THEE. And what does He say? "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

There are three things to be considered here:—Place,—Company,—Time.

1. PLACE—"PARADISE." We shall not enter into a critical consideration of this word. It could not be contained in the corner of a discourse. Be it sufficient to say that Paradise always has reference to a state of pleasure. Literally—a region of surpassing beauty

—from the Sanscrit *paradesha*. It is put for the abode of the blessed after death, Abraham's bosom, Heaven, where the spirits of the redeemed dwell with God. It is a place of safety, plenty and pleasure. Not as the Paradise which man lost. There the tree of life grows, but we may taste its fruits. There is happiness beyond all conception, but we shall never lose it, its pleasures are evermore. "Is it not reviving to hear this? that *eternal life* may be had, if it be not our own fault; that, whereas upon the sin of the first Adam, the *way of the tree of life* was blocked up, by the grace of the second Adam it is laid open again. The crown of glory is set before us as the prize of our high calling, which we may run for and obtain. Every one may have it. This Gospel is to be preached, this offer made to all, and none can say, "it belongs not to me;" this everlasting life is sure to all those who believe in Christ, and to them only. "*He that sees the Son, and believes on Him, shall be saved.*"

Thou shalt be in Paradise. Thou art dying as a criminal, but thou shalt be in Paradise. The body shall be laid in a malefactor's grave, but thou shalt be in Paradise. Thou art passing from earth with execrations and without regret, but thou art going home to Paradise. The mysterious Cross on Calvary was but the chariot in which Christ "went away" to "prepare a place" for the redeemed of all ages: His bleeding hand unlocked the door of Heaven to all believing humanity, and the cry which cleft the rocks awoke in Paradise the everlasting song, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." The savage and infatuated Jews, who made the Cross, little imagined they were rearing a ladder to glory—a ladder on which angels should evermore ascend and descend in missions of love to the sin-smitten planet. So it ever is: no man understands the final

possibility of any uttered thought, or of any special or incidental deed. An idea may revolutionize a world,—one deed may widen a circle of results that shall touch the sea of the infinite. Such was the issue of the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus: those facts have floated on every breeze, and are able finally to subjugate all rebellious powers, and to elevate humanity to this glorious Paradise!

“Cling to the Crucified!
His death is life to thee;
Life for eternity.
His pains thy pardon seal;
His stripes thy bruises heal;
His Cross proclaims thy peace,
Bids every sorrow cease.
His blood is all to thee,
It purges thee from sin;
It sets thy spirit free,
It keeps thy conscience clean.
Cling to the Crucified!

“Cling to the Crucified!
His is a heart of love,
Full as the hearts above;
Its depths of sympathy
Are all awake for thee;
His countenance is light,
Even in the darkest night.
That love shall never change,
That light shall ne'er grow dim;
Charge thou thy faithless heart
To find its all in Him.
Cling to the Crucified!”

Who of us have not often wished we could have

sung what we called certain tidings from the spirit-world? Bishop Simpson says: "I remember well, in a little company of young men who commenced a religious life about the same time I did, often to have conversed with them; I remember how, in some of our seasons of close converse, we said to each other: If some one of us is called away, if it be possible, we will come back and tell the others something of the unseen—the spirit-land." Ah, I think there is no one of us who has lost a friend but has thought in some way it might be possible for that friend to come back and speak to us. Oh! what would we give just for one glimpse of a loved face! What would we give to hear just one utterance from a sweet voice hushed in death! And then when certain thoughts reach the bosom, what would we give if some dear one we have known could come back and tell us there is a Heaven; there is the throne of God; there is the song of Angels; there is the tree of life; there is the throne of glory; there is the gathering of loved ones who have walked together in white, and now surround the throne of God! Oh! what would we give! And yet, Jesus Christ, "who came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man which is in Heaven," said: "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you." It is no poet's dream, no fictitious realm. Christ is too intelligent to be mistaken. He knows every part of the universe. He existed before the creation. He knew it in archetype. "I was set up from everlasting." He is too truthful to misrepresent. In him there is no motive to deceive. He is truth, unerring and unerrable truth. He is too kind to delude. "I would have told you." Such is the Paradise of God—a scene of undoubted reality.

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"There are no dreams beyond the tomb;
The night of dreams is o'er ;
'Tis only here they go and come,
On this dull, shadowy shore.

"Then shadows flee ; the invisible
Rises before our view ;
On every side comes up the real,
The certain, and the true.

"How true and great that world must be,
How false, how little this !
Man sees not what he seems to see,
He seems not what he is."

2. COMPANY—"WITH ME." This renders it quite unnecessary to discuss the question of the locality of Heaven. It is Heaven enough to be with Christ. When you see the Royal Standard floating in the breeze which proclaims the presence of the Queen of the Dominion you know that there is safety, plenty and pleasure. And when you know that you go to be with Jesus Christ, you know that you go to be in Paradise. I think Heaven would not be complete if Jesus were not there. One prolific source of pure enjoyment in the future life will be the personal presence of Christ. The Psalmist says: "Thou wilt show me the path of life ; in Thy presence is fulness of joy : at Thy right hand are pleasures for evermore." The blessedness of departed saints is that they are with their Saviour, who loved them and washed away their sins in His own blood, and thereby made them meet for Heaven. To this penitent malefactor Christ said: "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." And to His disciples He said: "I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am there ye may be also, and behold my glory." St. Paul speaks to the effect that the happiness of departed saints is to be present with

the Lord. Hence he expressed "a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." This simple consideration assured him of unalterable felicity. A Christless Heaven to departed saints would be an eternal blank. In this life Christ is the joy and glory of His people. They prefer Him to their chief good. They glory in His cross and triumph in His conquests. They reverence, admire, love and adore Him, above all earthly objects. And when they meet Him in the upper world they will see Him as He is; not as He was in the days of His flesh—"despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief"—but as he is in glory. In His glorified humanity, irradiated with the awful splendor of Supreme Divinity, they will not only recognize His glorious presence, and enjoy the most affectionate intercourse with Him, as did His disciples while He was on earth, but they will also have more enlightened and enlarged conceptions of His divine nature, and the infinite sublimity and transcendent beauty of His character. And when they see Him face to face, and from His lips receive the kindest welcome, their happiness will be "unspeakable and full of glory."

And let this be our answer to your fears on the ground of unworthiness. Fear not that thou shalt be as one that is sneaking into Heaven, and hast no right to be there, "for thou shalt be with me." I may illustrate this by an incident related to me when in England. A captain in the British Army had risen from the ranks, but on account of his humble origin, the other officers of the regiment treated him with coldness and contempt. They did not associate, nor exchange friendly calls with him; in fact they "left him severely alone." He bore this shameful treatment for some time, but being a man of sensi-

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ive nature, he resolved at length to resign his commission, and made this known to his commanding officer. The commander would not entertain such an idea, and endeavored to persuade him to reconsider the matter. He also promised to do what he could to reconcile the other officers, and bring about friendship. Whereupon, on occasion of the first "full parade," he paid this aggrieved captain remarkable attention; consulting him in all the manœuvres of the day; introducing him to military magnates who were present. The officers noted this, and from that very time there was no want of calls and cards, and every respect and kindness shown him by his brother officers. So thou shalt not feel ashamed to enter Paradise; holy angels will not despise thy degraded origin, for "thou shalt be with me." I shall receive you. I shall address to you the words of welcome home to Paradise. Come in, thou blessed, come home to be with me in Paradise. Absent from the body and present with the Lord. O, it is indeed, far better.

"Forever with the Lord!

Amen, so let it be;

Life from the dead is in that word,

'Tis immortality."

There is a remarkable passage in the Epistle to the Colossians, where the Apostle speaks of God reconciling to himself by Jesus Christ things in Heaven as well as things on earth. What need of reconciling things in Heaven? The explanation is very easy. Just suppose that there come an order from the Home Secretary that all our prisons should be thrown open, that every prisoner should be let loose, that every chain should be dissolved, and that all the criminals now condemned to imprisonment should be let loose upon society, so that we who seek to be honest should

be exposed to their depredations, to their insults, to their cruelty, to their dishonesty. Well, I think we honest people who try to keep the law would have a perfect right to go and knock at the door of the Home Secretary, and to ask the meaning of all this reversal of the order of law—to ask, how is it that criminals are treated like innocent people? How is it that men who have violated the law and deserve to suffer, how is it they have their liberty as if they had done nothing? Why is it that we innocent and loyal people are to be subjected to all the insults, and the cruelty, and the depredations of this vast mass of criminals let loose upon society? We should want to be reconciled, should we not? You would want some little explanation before you were reconciled. Look at those spiritual myriads upon myriads of beings once guilty, once deeply polluted with foulest stains of sins, yet admitted into the society of Heaven, and there associated with beings who never sinned—admitted into the immediate vicinity of the throne to share in the blessedness of the skies. I ask you, have not the sinless inhabitants of Heaven a right to go to the throne and ask for an explanation, and to say, How is it that beings who have sunk so deep in degradation and evil, that have manifested such hostility against the rule of the King—how is it that beings like these are admitted into our societies, and into all the privileges of Heaven? Well, there is only one explanation, Jesus exhibits His garment dipped in blood, and He shows to them His kingship written on the blood-stained garment, and seems to say to them, virtually, Well now, it is not an arbitrary act of sovereignty that has brought these people here. I do not admit them into Heaven simply because I will it, I do not admit them into Heaven without any respect to character at all. No, I died for these souls, I shed

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my blood for these human beings, and they have availed themselves of the atonement which I have offered for them, they have all been cleansed in the atoning blood, and now if you look on them, though they were full of stains and faults and evils, there is not now a flaw in them: they are without spot, and God has pronounced them without fault; and they are here because they have a character fitting them for the society of Heaven, fitting them for the privileges of Heaven—a character which they have obtained by means of my Atonement. Thus the King, in his sovereignty, ruled the heart of that penitent man from his Cross, and while the Crown shone athwart the smoke and the agony of the death, the King “opened the gates of the kingdom of Heaven unto all believers” when he said, “To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.”

3. THE TIME—“TO-DAY.” It is not to be a long sleep from which you shall wake up after many revolving centuries, to find yourself in Heaven. No, “to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.” Absent from the body, present with the Lord. The blessedness of the good takes place immediately after death. “From *henceforth*; yes, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.” There is in Rome a little altar over which is written that whosoever should there repeat a certain prayer would receive the indulgence of having eleven thousand years abridged from his appointed period in purgatory. Now, if an eleven thousand years reprieve could be so easily obtained, I wonder how many millions of years must be required to prepare a sinful soul for Paradise. If any man ever needed purgatory it was this thief, for he had always lived an abandoned life, and never had an opportunity for lengthened preparation. And yet Christ says to him, “To-day

shalt thou be with me in Paradise." The Shorter Catechism teaches that "the souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection."

"To-day!" How near is Earth to Heaven, time to eternity, this scene of sin and sorrow to Paradise! Let this assurance comfort you who have been bereaved of Christian friends. You gathered around their bed and received their parting counsels and salutations. You watched and wept as the pallor overspread their brow and the lips ceased to speak, and the insensibility of death glazed those eyes which had looked their last on earth and you, and there in bitterness and anguish you said—"Dead." No! in Paradise. You met in the house of mourning, you followed in mournful procession the bier to the burial, you laid the body in the narrow house—but the soul was in Paradise. You clothed yourself in the habiliments of grief and kept the days of mourning, but you were mourning for one in Paradise.

Let the same thought comfort you in the prospect of your own death. You do not die. The soul is immortal. The Rev. Newman Hall says:—"I will never forget the remark of a colored woman at the Falls of Niagara. After talking some time to the man who accompanied her, whom I found to be a person of great intelligence, and assuring them of the deep interest I had always felt in their cause, I bade them adieu. The woman had not spoken during the whole interview. But as I bade them farewell, for the first time she opened her lips and said, 'God reward you, sir, in Paradise, when you die—but you won't die. We don't die, we only go to Paradise.'"

Let the same thought comfort you amid your trials.

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Why sink under your burden? for to-day you may lay it down as you enter into Paradise; you may begin the day on earth and end it in Paradise. It is the rest of the weary traveller, the haven of the storm-tossed mariner, the home of the veteran pilgrim.

Let it restrain you from sin. Why yield to temptation? for to-day you may be in Paradise, and how would you like to meet your Lord in Paradise from the commission of such a sin? "You have not yet resisted unto blood striving against sin." "Blessed is he whom when his Lord cometh shall find him watching."

In conclusion look at those three crosses!

1. The Impenitent Thief's Cross. It is as near to hell as it is to Heaven. While one soul is passing to Paradise another is passing from the same spot to perdition. Awful thought!

2. The Saviour's Cross. It was the sight of this which made the dying thief repent and believe. Sinner, "behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" A heathen king was converted to Christianity, and when he was dying he asked those about him to make a cross and put him on it, and he said, "It lifts me, it lifts me." Ah! it does indeed "lift the sinner to God and to Heaven."

"In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wreck of time."

We are not permitted to stand by Calvary, and to see His sacrifice on the cross with our natural eye, and yet we do stand, and even in earth's darkness and gloom, by faith see Him on Calvary, the sacrifice for sin, the Lamb of God. We stand and hear that groan; we see the throbbings of that mighty heart in its pangs of agony until it bursts. We hear Him say, "It is finished," and we feel that He died for us.

Strangely and mysteriously that blood seems to flow from Calvary. It touches our hearts, and the guilt is taken away. And now, to-day, I rejoice that in this congregation every heart may take hold of the Saviour. He is near—waiting to save. O that every heart would come to Him, crying in penitence, "Lord, remember me."

"The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day;
And there may I, though vile as he,
Wash all my sins away.

"Dear dying Lamb! Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed Church of God
Be saved to sin no more."

3. The Penitent Thief's Cross. Do not depend upon his example as justifying your delay: "one was saved upon the cross," as the old divines used to tell us, "that none might despair; and only one, that none might presume." "Now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation." Do not wait until you come to die, to repent. You may die in a moment. Do not wait until you are ill. You may never be ill.—or you may be too ill to repent—too ill to think at all. My brother, I beseech you not to trust to a death-bed repentance. I have stood by many a death-bed, and few indeed have they been where I could have believed that the man was in a condition physically (to say nothing of anything else) clearly to see and grasp the message of the Gospel. There is no limit to the mercy. I know that God's mercy is boundless. I know that "whilst there is life there is hope." I know that a man, going—swept down that great Niagara—if, before his little skiff tilts over into the awful rapids, he can make one great bound, with all

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his strength, and reach the solid ground—I know he *may be saved*. It is an awful risk to run. A moment's miscalculation and skiff and voyager alike are whelming in the green chaos below, and come up mangled into nothing, far away down yonder upon the white turbulent foam. O, do not put off this matter! The very fact of your giving your life to the devil and rejecting Christ until the last moment, will so burden your heart, that repentance, faith and prayer will be impossible. "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near." And may God so bless to you this message, that when at last you come to die you too shall hear these blessed words addressed to you: "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

"O safe at home, where the dark tempter roams not,
How have I envied thy far happier lot!
Already resting where the evil comes not;
The tears, the toil, the woe, the sin forgot.

"O safe in port, where the rough billow breaks not,
Where the wild sea-moan saddens thee no more,
Where the remorseless stroke of tempest shakes not;
When, when shall I too gain that tranquil shore?

"Away, above these scenes of guilt and folly,
Beyond this desert's heat and dreariness;
Safe in the city of the ever holy,
Let me make haste to join thy earlier bliss.

"Just gone within the veil, where I shall follow,
Not far before me, hardly out of sight;
I down beneath thee in this cloudy hollow.
And thou above me on yon sunny height!

"Gone to begin a new and happier story,
Thy bitter tale of earth now told and done:
These outer shadows for that inner glory
Exchanged for ever,—O thrice blessed one!"

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"Is it well with the child? It is well.—II. Kings iv, 26.

"I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."—II. Samuel xii. 23.

"And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels."—Malachi iii. 17.

—o—

*"—A simple child,
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death?"*

—o—

"WHO PLUCKED THAT FLOWER?"

• Cried the Gardener, as he walked through the garden.

His fellow-servant answered,

"THE MASTER!"

And the gardener held his peace.

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CHAPTER IV.

Heaven, the Home of our Children.

“But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.”—Matt. xix. 14.

In reading the Old Testament we are impressed with the mournfulness which was felt, in the early times to which it refers, with regard to the death of all except such as were gloriously slain in battle, or such as were old, and went out like an extinguished light. There was then no illumination of the act of dying. Men did not die with the rising sun. They died, as it were, with the setting sun, when darkness rolled toward midnight. But the moment you turn to the New Testament the whole atmosphere changes, and there is comfort—but not such comfort only as mere philosophy tries to administer to us. The comfort of the New Testament belongs to the whole realm of the mind. It includes the better and purer life, and the certainty of re-union beyond the grave.

Since the death of dear children, which took place in the autumn of 1880, I have felt a strong desire to express my views on the subject of the relation of children to the kingdom of Christ; and to give such instances of early piety as have come under my own knowledge and observation. And it is my earnest prayer that any such incidents which may be related in this chapter may be a solace and a blessing to some hearts in the great *household of the sorrowing*. This is

the largest household in the world. There is hardly a dwelling in which there is not one dead. "Death has come up into our windows, and entered into our palaces." He strikes at the dearest objects of our affections. Into the homes of the bereaved I have been called many times. I have sat down beside the afflicted father and mother, and tried to comfort them. I have read to them the heavenly message of consolation, and earnestly prayed that God would comfort their hearts; but there was one thing in this world that I never could understand until I felt it for myself,—and that was the sensations of a parent over his or her *own child* as it lay in the first awful silence of death. Now, bereaved parents, I can speak as one of yourselves. I can preach to you a Gospel not only of *salvation*, but also of *consolation*. I know what it is to sit day by day and night by night beside the couch of dying children, to witness the sufferings which soon wasted what was before a robust frame, to listen to the shortening and struggling breath, to see the bright eyes grow dim in death, the lovely countenances changing, the body sinking, the angelic spirits departing; to feel a surge of heart-grief which though felt, cannot be described; to lay two beautiful boys in the cold grave, and then to return to a desolate home, only to see the empty crib, cast-off clothes and useless playthings. I know all this, for I have felt it all. Our little ones are gone, and we miss them very much. No longer will they gladden us by their smiles, or enrich us with their love, or run to meet us at the gate, as they were wont, on our return from labour in the Master's service.

"We shall miss them when the flowers come,
In the garden where they played;
We shall miss them more by the fireside
When the flowers have all decayed.

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"We shall see their toys and their empty chairs,
And the horse they used to ride ;
And they will speak, with a silent speech,
Of the little boys that died.

"We shall all go home to our Father's house—
To our Father's house in the skies,
Where the hope of our soul shall have no blight,
And our love no broken ties ;

"We shall roam on the banks of the River of peace,
And bathe in its blissful tide ;
And one of the joys of our Heaven shall be
The little boys that died."

There are few who will read these lines, that do not know where there is a little grave, which, to them, is as an urn that holds the ashes of a faded flower. Every home has been made happy, sometime, by the glee of little children. They enter refined homes as the rays of sunlight that make the mornings beautiful in the spring. To fond parents they are the morning light and the evening star of their lives. A. R. Elliott says :

"I have visited often a quiet little home whose father is a busy man of the world and whose mother's joy was in the happiness of her children. The light of the home was Bella, and little Nellie ; her father called her his little 'Jim.' When I would enter the cottage they would come to me and tell me of their childish sports. I was not long in learning to renew my visits, for the parents gave me welcome, and the little ones, with their golden curls, always met me at the door.

"One would come to me freely, but the other was timid, because her nature was more delicate and refined. I remember a Sabbath that I spent at the cottage when the little girls romped with me more

than usual. Timid little Nell climbed to my knee and told of her tiny bank and of her 'Trismas tards.' When I left that evening, she kissed me a sweet 'dood night!' How often have I thought, since, that I did not know then, that I should never see her bright baby face any more.

"A messenger came to me, one day, and told me that little Nell was sick. He came another day and told me that she had passed into that long and peaceful sleep. I went to the little cottage again, but it seemed as though part of its sunlight was gone—gone back to Him who gave it—gone back to the Son of God.

"The grief of the loving parents was very great. I went with them to the grave of their little girl—to the grave of little 'Jim'—to the urn that was to hold the ashes of a sleeping object of love.

"They buried her where the open grave was shadowed by the barren limbs of an over-hanging oak, where fallen autumn leaves rustled at our feet. The waves of Michigan's waters rolled along the distant beach, and a white winged vessel, just visible at the horizon, looked, I thought, as the phantom ship that makes no return trips from the unknown shore.

"As I saw the members of the household at the cottage, stand sorrowfully at the grave of little Nell, and realized that I, too, had learned to love the little one, the first tears that ever came to my eyes at a baby's grave came then.

"This is but an instance. The world is full of graves. Places where fond hopes are decaying—where love lingers to wave the last sad farewell at the exit door of the world. Oh, the grave! The grave! The low and quiet wayside inn, where all at last must sleep, and where the only salutation is—good night! good night!

"When the birds return again to sing their songs in the Northern meadows, and the spring buds bloom where rustle now the dead leaves of autumn, those who cared for Nellie will go, sometimes, to her little grave, and leave there some floral tribute of their love."

There is a ministry of children which works in invisible ways. I can conceive of an artist who should paint, as some people write, with invisible ink. He goes through a newly builded or newly appropriated house, and works, and seems to be marking the walls; but from his pencil nothing comes, no fresco, either on the ceiling or on the sides of the rooms. He continues to work for days and weeks and months, during the winter weather, and then departs. And on some beautiful day in June, when the air comes to exactly the right temperature, and the constituent elements are happily coincident, by some chemical action the artist's work is disclosed, and that house is filled with exquisite pictures, above, on either hand, all around. We walk in a trance of beauty; that which we behold is like the reproduction of a dream, or the incarnation of a poem. The house glows. Now, our children are little artists; and by their quips and pranks, by their mirth, by their earnest love, by their strange manner when knowledge dawns upon their minds, by their moments of devotion, by their little pattering prayers, by the ten thousand ways in which they carry their daily life, they are filling the house, they are filling the air, with pictures which are never so beautiful as afterwards when they are gone. Then the dress that they wore, the book that their fingers thumbed and from which they got their first instruction, the place where they sat and looked up with a merry laugh, the couch which was theirs, the hymn that they sang

—all these things, which were transiently remarked by us, but which we had, perhaps, forgotten, begin to blossom out. Our memory is frescoed with the rarest and sweetest and most delicate of all conceivable thoughts and feelings. They sanctify every place where the departed loved ones have been. A golden mist seems to have been let down from Heaven upon it; and it never can be other than sacred to our eyes. And here we get the meaning of a sacredness which no ecclesiastical hand can impose on material. It comes from the life itself that is associated with all the scenes in the midst of which we walk or live.

What a mystery the death of little children is! We expect the old to die; but our hearts cling tenderly to the young, while we almost refuse to contemplate the possibility of their being taken from us. Some might say, why are they given at all, if they are so soon to be taken from us. The enjoyment of our little ones, while they are with us, is a blessing, and for that we should be grateful. That is a profound utterance of Tennyson, when in lines of condolence to a bereaved friend he says:

“God gives us love; something to love
He lends us; but when love is grown
To ripeness, that on which it throve
Falls off; and love is left alone.”

In our grief, is it not natural and right that we should attempt to look forward, and ask, what has become of our children? Where are they now? What is the ministry toward them in the life to come? and what is *their* ministry there? Soon after the death of our children, a dear ministerial friend called the attention of certain members of our family to Bickersteth's "*Yesterday, To-day and Forever.*" We read it with great profit and comfort, in those days of our darkness and sorrow. We subjoin here a

somewhat lengthy extract from the book, on children in Heaven:

"A babe in glory is a babe for ever.
 Perfect as spirits, and able to pour forth
 Their glad heart in the tongues which angels use,
 These nurslings gather'd in God's nursery
 For ever grow in loveliness and love,
 (Growth is the law of all intelligence)
 Yet cannot pass the limit which defines
 Their being. They have never fought the fight,
 Nor borne the heat and burden of the day,
 Nor stagger'd underneath the weary cross;
 Conceived in sin, they sinn'd not; though they died,
 They never shudder'd with the fear of death:
 These things they know not and can never know.
 Yet fallen children of a fallen race,
 And early to transgression, like the rest,
 Sure victims, they were bought with Jesus' blood,
 And cleansed by Jesus' Spirit, and redeemed
 By His Omnipotent arm from death and hell:
 A link betwixt mankind and angelhood:
 As born of woman, sharers with all saints
 In that great ransom paid upon the cross:
 In purity and inexperience
 Of guilt akin to angels. Infancy
 Is one thing, manhood one. And babes though part
 Of the true archetypal house of God
 Built on the heavenly Zion, are not now,
 Nor will be ever, massive rocks rough-hewn,
 Or ponderous corner-stones, or fluted shafts
 Of columns, or far-shadowing pinnacles;
 But rather as the delicate lily-work
 By Hiram wrought for Solomon of old,
 Enwreath'd upon the brazen chapiters,
 Or flowers of lilies round the molten sea.
 Innumerable flowers thus bloom and blush
 In heaven. Nor reckon God's designs in them

Frustrate, or shorn of full accomplishment:
 The lily is as perfect as the oak ;
 The myrtle is as fragrant as the palm ;
 And Sharon's roses are as beautiful
 As Lebanon's majestic cedar crown.

"And when I saw my little lambs unchanged
 And heard them fondly call me by my name,
 'Then is the bond of parent and of child
 Indissolute,' I exclaimed and drew
 Them closer to my heart and wept for joy."

D. W. M. Taylor, who lost a dear child, asked himself, in the hour of his great grief, "What do we desire for our children? I had to answer this, that and the other earthly blessing, if God should see fit, but, in any event, Heaven at last, and if need be, at the sacrifice of all the rest, Heaven at last. I then said, I meant to give my flower to God when it was full blown, but, if he preferred it in the bud, why should I murmur, since it is thereby only the more surely His?" That our children are dearer to God than they could ever be to us, and that they go quicker than a shooting star into His presence when they leave us, we are not left to doubt; but what is their ministry there, about which our thoughts inquire more than about their ministry in the past, we know not. We know that in the surrounding throng the children were more to Christ than all the others. We know (whatever it may mean) that their angels stand in the presence of the Father and behold His face. Now, whatever our relations may be in life, when we stand at the grave, and have buried our friends, we long to see them again; whether our departed be parents, venerable gathered as a shock of corn, or our companions and equals, taken in mid-life, or our little children, we fain would behold them

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in their new life; but we cannot. And what do we get instead? We get this: when God shall bring again the Lord Jesus Christ, He shall bring them with Him. The Apostle says that we shall be together with them. "And so we shall ever be with the Lord." Who can understand the grandeur and the fulness of the meaning of that? Who can take in the horizon which it opens to our thought? The eternal presence; the wonder and the mystery of the heart of God; the very solar centre of the moral universe—who can form any adequate conception of these things? And yet it is to enter the realm of these things that our little children depart. There they are safe; there they are nourished. They will wait in that harbour where no storm comes until we go up thither; and they shall be gathered to us again; not as they were when they were upon earth, not seeming to us as they did then; but truly ours, truly together with us, and we and they together with the Lord.

Concluding a discourse on the words, "of such is the kingdom of Heaven," Henry W. Beecher said: "I think our dying children go to Christ. I have been called to give up dear ones. Not once, nor twice, nor thrice, alone, but many times. I have sent my children on before me. Once, wading knee deep in the snow, I buried my earliest. It was March, and dreary, and shivering, and awful; and then the doctrine that Christ sat in an eternal summer of love, and that my child was not buried but had gone up to One that loved it better than I, was the only comfort I had. If I thought my children, dying, went out to wander little pilgrims in darkness; if I thought that they went wandering, they knew not where, in all the realm of spirits, I could not be consoled, and only stoicism could cover the wound which it could

not heal. But since I know that God loves children, and that He has said, "Of such is the kingdom of God," and that He wants them to be permitted to come to Him, though it is with pain and sorrow that I yield them up, it is not without hope and consolation. Parents, whose children have gone from you, God has taken them, and He is a better father and mother to them than you could have been. Be of good cheer, and you will meet them by and by, if only you yourselves are like little children in Christ."

THE SAVIOUR'S INVITATION TO LITTLE CHILDREN, recorded with slight circumstantial variety by three of the evangelists, furnishes one of the most affecting scenes that adorn the wonderful history of Christ. The deep solicitude of Jesus respecting the spiritual welfare of children is clearly manifested, as also is the faith and confidence of the parents or guardians in His love and power to do them good; and, we may add, that the disciples, by aiming to be very religious, became unnatural, which was frequently the case, and this arose from the false ideas of devotion which they attached to their master. The scene is tender and touching, and the aspect in which Jesus, the world's redeemer, here appears, has attracted and consoled parental hearts through long successive ages. *Who were brought to Jesus?* The young, or according to Matthew and Mark, "little children," the original term signifying not youths but the diminutive denoting mere children or infants. Luke uses the term rendered infants or babes. It is the same which he had used for "the *babe* wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger," and which Peter in his first epistle uses when he speaks of "new born *babes*." They were infants apparently brought in arms, and which Jesus took up in His arms. I call special attention to this point

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because a popular preacher in England, and an amiable writer in the same country, have recently attempted to show, or rather assume, that they are not mere infants, but little children capable of instruction that are referred to in this passage. There does not appear the shadow of a reason for such an interpretation of the text or context. Everything said and done by those who brought them, by the disciples who opposed their being brought, and by Jesus to whom they were brought, as well as the plain import of the terms by which they were designated as "little children," infants or babes, forbid such an idea. It is a notion brought TO the text and not brought OUT of it.

God's interest in human life begins at the earliest possible period. This is an argument for "INFANT BAPTISM" which I have never known to be touched, much less shaken. The narrow critics who have taken upon themselves to settle that question, have been fighting each other with Greek derivatives and grammatical inflexions, as if *any moral* question could be settled by such means! I make this question one of *life*, not one of grammar; and I put this direct and urgent inquiry, namely, when does God's interest in human life begin? When does Christ's heart begin to yearn in pity over all human creatures? *When* do compassion's tears well up into the Redeemer's eyes? *When* does He feel the kindling of love towards human beings? Is it when they are five years old, or ten;—does He shut up His love until they are twenty-one? The question may appear quaint, but I press it; I urge a distinct answer—When does Christ's interest in human life begin? I contend that His interest relates to life, not to age; to birth, not to birth-days. As soon as a child is born, that great redeeming heart yearns with *paternal* love.

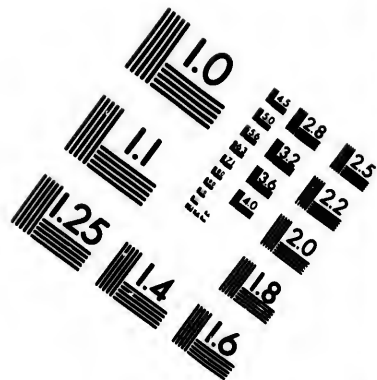
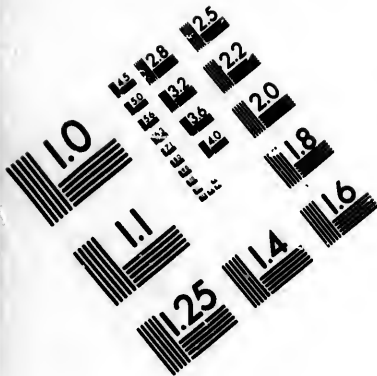
What has Christ to do with what we call age? *What is age?* It may be useful for us to keep a record of anniversaries, to tabulate for statistical purposes, to call one man twenty and another forty, though forty, in reality, may be less than twenty; but will you presume to reduce Christ to a commercial agent, who deals with men according to their ages? No! I hold it as a sweet joy, a most delicious and enrapturing thought, that Jesus Christ interests Himself in me, that my name was written in His heart ere it fell from my mother's lips, and that before a father knows the mystery and pride of parental life, Jesus experiences the travail of the soul which yearns to make the child an heir of immortality. Hence I see a beauty in Infant Baptism which is unequalled; in Christian parents bringing their loved little one unto the temple, and having poured upon it the clean water—Christ's own symbol of purity—and having pronounced over it the GREAT THREEFOLD NAME in which we live and move and have our being. It is said, however, that the child cannot *understand* the deed, and consequently cannot receive any good from it. Shallow, indeed, is such reasoning! Understand? What is understanding? Does the child understand the mystery of drinking life from its mother's bosom? Does the child understand the sublimer mystery of the clasped fingers and uplifted eyes with which the mother supplicates the benediction of Heaven? Be it known unto you that all our blessings do not come along the narrow highway of our poor *understanding*; the children taken up into the stranger's arms did not understand that the stranger was the Saviour, and that the Saviour was God! I do then encourage all parents to bring their children early to the temple; to carry them to the sacred place; to lend them unto the Lord before they can give themselves away; and

what know we, but that the mother's loan may be confirmed by the man's own gift.

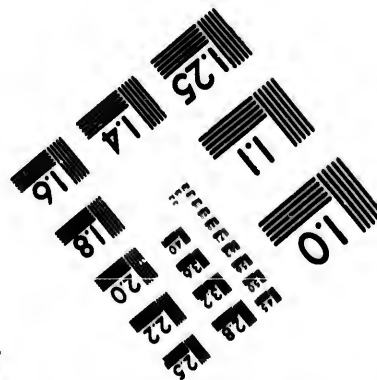
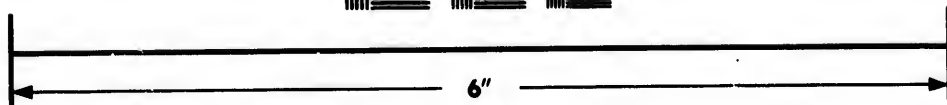
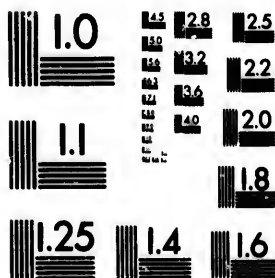
With what grace and beauty is the bud of human life fraught. There are in it, and around it, a charm and loveliness which far surpass all things else that are earthly. The little germ is love, as it grows and expands, promising to become the virgin rose, and to charm the eye with its beauty. The tender sprout is lovely, unfolding itself, and growing up rapidly, until it becomes a beautiful branch covered with foliage. The dawn of the young day dissipating the gloom of night, and opening up the newborn beauties of nature, is lovely. The spring, as it comes gliding along the tender year, putting a new fair robe over the broad fields of nature, with the winds singing among the hills, the crystal streamlet making music in the vale, the soaring lark and divers other birds with golden plumage, pouring forth streams of sweet melody from amid the enamoured bushes. All this is beautiful, and delights exceedingly. But more beautiful the sight of young children opening up in the virgin freshness of childhood. Robert Pollock says they are "roses that bathe about the well of life; young loves, young hopes dancing on morning's cheek; gems leaping in the coronet of life; so beautiful, so full of life, gay, guileless, lovely, sportive little things, playing around the den of sorrow."

There is nothing certainly indicated regarding the religious character of those parents who brought their children to Jesus. Whether they were pious Hebrews or believers in the Messiahship of Jesus or in His God-sent character at all, or whether they were merely influenced by custom and the example of others, we have no information. There would be in the appearance and demeanour of Jesus, not merely the evidence of transcendent sanctity, but also





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such a radiation of kindness and tenderness and love, that little children would instantly take to Him. The children would like to be touched by Him—it would be delightful to feel His hands upon their heads as He invoked a blessing on them, and mothers would instinctively be delighted too. For, as a general thing; they are devoted to their children, and drawn to a religious teacher who interests himself in them. The poet Lamartine, in alluding to his father and mother, says, "I remember once to have seen the branch of a willow, which had been torn by the tempest's hand from the parent trunk, floating in the morning light upon the angry surges of the overflowing Saone. On it a female nightingale covered the nest, as it drifted down the foaming stream; and the male on the wing followed the wreck which was bearing away the object of his love." Beautiful illustration, indeed, of the tender affection of parents for their children.

"A beautiful and smiling child
Arrests a mother's loving eye;
No star, no pearl of lustre mild,
No saint, no seraph from the sky
Could charm her soul with softer light,
Could yield her such supreme delight."

Much, however, as father and mother love their offspring, Christ's love for them is infinitely stronger and more enduring. Some of you may have seen the beautiful picture, by Raphael, of Christ blessing little children. A crowd of people had gathered about Him, listening with rapt attention to His gracious words. In the outer circle several mothers, with children in their arms, are trying to work their way through the throng, that they may ask the Saviour to bless their little ones. Even His disciples

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imagine that He will not wish to be interrupted, and tell the women that they had better remain quietly where they are. Jesus sees it all, and is much displeased at this attempt to keep them back. He waved His hand to the crowd, that they should open the way for the mothers to draw near, and said in His gentlest accents, "*Suffer the little children to come unto me!*"

"I think, when I read that sweet story of old,
When Jesus was here among men,
How he called little children like lambs to His fold,
I should like to have been with Him then.
I wish that His hands had been laid on my head,
That His arms had been thrown around me,
And that I might have seen His kind look when He said,
'Let the little ones come unto me.'

"Yet still to His footstool in prayer I may go,
And ask for a share of His love ;
And if I thus earnestly seek Him below,
I shall see Him and hear Him above,
In that beautiful world He has gone to prepare,
For all who are washed and forgiven ;
And many dear children are gathering there,
For of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

Why were these infants brought to Jesus? Not to be instructed, for they were incapable of instruction, being mere infants, and we have no indication of anything of the kind being done. But they were brought to be blessed. This is expressly stated. "That He would put His hands on them and pray." They were capable of being blessed though not of being taught—capable of being saved, though not of believing. Jesus blessed them by invoking on them a blessing from the Divine Father, His own will being evermore in harmony with His Father's will. I be-

lieve that these children, by the blessing which Jesus imparted, were made heirs of immortality. They received the gift of everlasting life, and probably became in after-life active and laborious missionaries. Observe also that Jesus commended them, saying, "Unless you become as little children, you cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven;" not that they possessed great moral excellence, but that they possessed that conscious dependence and confiding spirit. One of the most pleasing characteristics of our Saviour's ministry was his genial, gracious manner towards little ones; and when we see them gathering about His knees, we discover how strong must have been the power of sympathy which united them together. The Lord Jesus is the same now that He was when He dwelt in Judæa, so many ages ago. He is still saying, "*Suffer the little children to come unto me!*"

The disciples interposed to prevent their presentation to Jesus. They said, Let the teacher alone; keep these urchins away; He is on His way to the throne. What have they to do with Him? They will only degrade His dignity. Jesus was much displeased, and said, Where is your love of humanity? In what school have you formed your views? Keep little children *away from me!* "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

"When mothers of Salem their children brought to Jesus,
The stern disciples drove them back and bade them depart;
But Jesus saw them ere they fled, and sweetly smiled and
kindly said—

Suffer little children to come unto me!"

The disciples, no doubt, on this occasion, were actuated by feelings of respect and veneration for their master, and regard to the importance of the work in

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which He was engaged. They deemed it an intrusion and an impertinence for these mothers to interrupt and trouble Him with their babes. But they ought to have known better. From the love and tenderness He had always shown even to the very outcasts of humanity, those most deeply sunk in sin and error; from His constant readiness to help the helpless, to comfort the sorrowful, and, above all, from the radiant looks and inexpressible gentleness and ineffable sweetness with which they had doubtless ever seen Him hail and welcome children and babes, they ought to have known how grateful to His loving heart such a scene as now opened to their view would be. They ought to have remembered the prophetic teachings concerning the coming Messiah King. "He shall gather the lambs in His arms and carry them in His bosom." "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast ordained strength," or perfected praise.

"The blessed Jesus ever loved to trace
The innocent brightness of an infant's face.
He raised them in His holy arms;
He blessed them from the world and all its harms;
Heirs though they were of sin and shame,
He blessed them in His own and in His Father's name."

—Keble.

The rebuke which Jesus administered to those who hindered, and the encouragement which He gave to those who brought the infants, deserve our special attention.—
"But Jesus said, Suffer little children:" in the original it is the little children—the little children that were there. Suffer them, that is, let them alone. Let go the children, let them come. Off your hands! The disciples had evidently put forth their hands to restrain the concourse. The word here rendered suffer is often rendered leave. (Mark iv., 20-26.) It means

leave alone. It is often rendered let alone. Suffer is scarcely the proper term. The Saviour does not ask His disciples' sufferance. Neither does He ask them to condescend to the little ones. Permit, too, is not strong enough. Jesus was speaking authoritatively, though no doubt with mild authority. "And forbid them not," literally, and hinder them not, "to come unto me." These words are to be connected closely with the immediately preceding expression "hinder them not," but not with the foregoing expression; and hence it is an error in punctuation to insert a comma after "*and hinder them not*" as if "*to come unto me*" were to be co-ordinately connected with the two clauses. Mark says here, "He was much displeased"—literally very indignant. This marks the deep and tender interest He felt in the infants, and the beautiful appropriateness of their being brought to Him, and His grief and anger that the disciples should have so forgotten His well known character, and the grand design of His mission. The severity of this public rebuke is the highest proof of the depth and tenderness of His love to the infant race of man.

"Pointing to such, well might Cornelia say,
 When the rich casket shone in bright array,
 'These are my jewels!' Well of such as he,
 When Jesus spake, well might His language be,
 'Suffer these little ones to come to me!'"

—Rogers.

Notice the grand reason for inviting the infants to His presence and to His arms. "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." Mark and Luke have it the Kingdom of God. Let us first examine the phrase "Kingdom of Heaven," or the kingdom of the heavens, which, so far as the New Testament is concerned, is found in Matthew alone. As has been well observed, in the other gospels and in the epistles, it is replaced by the

corresponding expression, "the Kingdom of God," and in certain isolated cases we find the modified expression the kingdom of God's dear son, the kingdom of Christ and of God, the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, God's heavenly kingdom. The kingdom referred to in all these expressions is a real kingdom: a community, that is to say, consisting of a king and his subjects. The king is God, and hence the expression, "the Kingdom of God." But God is in Christ and Christ in God, and hence the kingdom is the kingdom of Christ and of God. Christ spoke of it as belonging to Himself; "my kingdom," said he, "is not of this world." Christ is thus the king—the king of kings. In the great economy of mercy He is the Father's vicegerent. "Behold," said Daniel, "one like unto the son of man came with the clouds of Heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages, should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." It was doubtless to this kingdom John the Baptist referred when he cried, "it is at hand," that is, the time is at hand when it shall be established. It is well called the kingdom of Heaven. Its primary characteristic is heavenliness. Its origin is in Heaven. Its end is in Heaven. Its King is heavenly. Its subjects are heavenly in character and destiny. Its laws are heavenly. Its privileges are heavenly. Its institutions are heavenly. Its own culmination is in Heaven, and is indeed Heaven. Its institutions on earth are earnest of the glory of Heaven. Thus, the kingdom on earth and the kingdom in Heaven are one,—the one Kingdom of Heaven. There is one side of it, or one sphere, as it

were, on earth—the under side or sphere: there is another side of it, another sphere, in Heaven,—the upper side or sphere. This kingdom has had existence in essence throughout all past ages and dispensations. It underlay the whole Jewish economy, which, in its forms, was a hieroglyphic outcome or type of the heavenly reality. But when John the Baptist made his appearance in the wilderness, it was about to be inaugurated in a purer and maturer phase, by the personal appearance of the heavenly king. Hence the heraldic cry of this kingdom. Jesus said, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." "My kingdom is not of this world." "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation." "The kingdom of God is within you; or among you." Of it Paul said, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." In its widest acceptation it comprehends the mediatorial economy. It is represented in various aspects and phases in the New Testament, especially in the gospels; and by our Lord in His parables. "For of such is the kingdom of Heaven," that is, to such the Kingdom of Heaven belongs. The Kingdom of Heaven is looked at, for the moment, on the side of its privileges. The privileges, the blessings, the joys, the glories, the honors of the kingdom belong to such. Such, that is, such little children as these. As a recent and eminently learned and candid commentator, Rev. Dr. Morison, of Glasgow, well remarks: "This is certainly the most natural interpretation of the '*such*.' Some would interpret the such as referring to those who in voluntary character are like little children. But (1) the word (*τοιούτος*) *such* does not naturally exclude a demonstrative reference to the children themselves. Jesus evidently means, 'Yet of these is the

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Kingdom of Heaven.' The kingdom belongs to little children. This will appear by comparing the following passages, viz.: Matthew ix. 8, 'But when the multitude saw it they marvelled and glorified God which had given *such* power unto men' (*this power*). Luke ix. 9, 'And Herod said, John have I beheaded, but who is this of whom I hear *such* things' (*these things*). Luke xiii. 2, 'And Jesus answered and said, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffer *such* things' (*these things*). John iv. 23, 'For the Father seeketh *such* to worship him.' John viii. 5, 'Now Moses in the Law commanded us that *such* should be stoned.' John ix. 16, 'How can a man that is a sinner do *such* (*these*) miracles?' Romans i. 32, 'They that commit *such* things are worthy of death.' Acts xxii. 22, 'Away with *such* a fellow from the earth' (*this fellow*). Romans ii. 2,3, 'But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them that commit *such* things (*these things*). And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest those which do *such* things' (*these things*). I Cor. v. 1, 5, 11, 'Such fornication.' 'With *such* an one we are not to eat' (*with this one or one of this sort*). I Cor. xvi. 16, 'That ye submit yourselves unto *such*' (*unto these*). II. Cor. iii. 12, 'Seeing that we have *such* hope' (*this hope*). II. Cor. x. 11, 'Let *such* an one think (*this one, or one of this sort*). II. Cor. xii. 1-5, 'And I knew *such* a man' (*this man*). 'Such a one' (*this one*). 'Of *such* a one will I glory' (*of this one will I glory*). Galatians, v. 2, 3, 'Against *such* there is no law' (*against these*). (2.) It does not naturally point to persons who were merely like children. The word is only once translated 'like' in the New Testament, and then freely, inexactly and imperfectly. See Acts xix. 25, 'Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation' (*of this or the same occupation*). (3.)

It is not the case that little children are incapable of belonging to the kingdom of God. In all earthly kingdoms there are little children; and why should there be none in the heavenly? Little children must be under some spiritual sceptre or other as soon as they exist. Some one must reign over them and have a right to them. They must be either in the kingdom of darkness or in the kingdom of light and of Heaven. In which of the two shall we say? If they should die while little children they must go somewhere;—either upwardly or downwardly, whither? Some king or other must claim them, and accord to them the rights and privileges of incipient citizenship. There can be no doubt that they belong to God and His Christ. And indeed it is this fact that they do belong to God's heavenly kingdom which constitutes one of the distinctions of the *Kingdom of Heaven*, properly so called, from the *Church*, properly so called. It is true, indeed, as is indicated by Meyer, that the developed traits of moral character, which distinguish full grown subjects of the Kingdom of Heaven are not present in little children. But then it is equally true that there is the absence of the character of those who are rebels and enemies. And assuredly the favour of their natural Sovereign, the King of kings, will not be denied them until it be morally forfeited. (4.) It is altogether unnatural to suppose that our Saviour had no interest in the little children themselves, but was exclusively interested in older persons of child-like character. Can we suppose that his state of mind, if fully unfolded, might have been thus expressed?—'Hinder not these little ones from coming to me. True, I have no interest in them whatsoever. I am interested only in adults; I have to do as a Saviour only with adults. My kingdom has no real little children in it. I am not their king.

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I have no claim on them, no crown for them, and no favors to confer on them. I have no place for them in my kingdom. But yet they are living and lively pictures, as it were, of the persons in whom I am interested. They serve as mirrors to reflect that character of my subjects which is pleasing in my sight; and by this association of ideas I feel so far interested in them. It is impossible to suppose that our Saviour thought and felt in this manner. His interest in the little children was real, and for their own sakes. It was primary; and not merely secondary, and because of the child-likeness of His subjects. If they who are like little children belong to the kingdom of Heaven, why should we for a moment doubt that the little children themselves belong to the kingdom? Doubtless they all do. And if that change which men call *death* happen to them while they are still little children, we may rest assured that to the little ones it will be *life everlasting*. They will not be shut out from the higher province of the kingdom of Heaven, when they are snatched away from the lower."

LET ME NOW POINT OUT SOME FEATURES OF EARLY PIETY; AND GIVE A FEW ILLUSTRATIONS OF THIS BEAUTIFUL GRACE. The beautiful portion of the Gospel history connected with the text under consideration, I always read at the baptism of infants, and when parents and children together hear it, the interest which the Saviour feels in them cannot be doubted. "O mother," said a little girl, on returning from church, and running into her mother's sick-room, "I have heard the child's Gospel to-day!" It was this very passage. Another, about seven years old, heard the same read when she was near death, and, as her sister closed the book, the little sick one said, "How kind! I shall soon go to Jesus. He will

take me up in His arms, and bless me, too!" The sister tenderly kissed her, and asked, "Do you love me, dearest?" "Yes," she answered, "but don't be angry, I love Jesus more!" Why does the Saviour show such tender affection for children? I shall give you several reasons for it. *Because they have a confiding trust in God.* It has been left for grown men and women to be guilty of unbelief. A child was asked what faith was, and promptly replied, "It is doing God's will, and asking no questions." Could any definition have been better? A lady said to a little daughter of the missionary Judson, "Were you not afraid to journey so far over the ocean?" "Why, no, madam," returned the believing child: "father prayed for us!" During a recent hard winter, a poor widow, with seven helpless children, was almost reduced to her last crust of bread, when one of the little boys, who saw her distress and anxiety, said to her, "Please don't cry, mother; I will write a letter to the Lord Jesus to help us!" The woman was too much occupied with her troubles to notice his singular remark, and so, taking her silence for approval of his purpose, he sat down and scrawled on a bit of paper, torn from an old writing-book, these words: "My dear Saviour: my poor mother, and my little brothers and sisters, have had no breakfast nor dinner to-day; please send us something to eat." He then signed his name with the street and number, and, running to the post-office, dropped the letter into the box. When the letters were assorted, the clerk's attention was attracted by one directed, in a child's hand, "To the Lord Jesus Christ." In his perplexity, he showed it to the postmaster, and he in turn handed it to a good Christian man, who came into the office for his letters. "I will take care of it!" said the gentleman. And so he did. He went

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directly to the place designated in the boy's note, and I need hardly tell you how much pleasure it gave him to help the poor family, for the Saviour's sake.

Children have a holy fear of God. A wicked man, who was in the habit of going to a neighbor's field to steal corn, one day took his little son to help him carry the bag. Handing the bag to the child, the father climbed up on the fence, to take a good look about him, to see whether any one was coming that way. Satisfied that all was safe, he began to pluck the ears of corn and put them in the bag, which the boy held open for him. "Father," said the child, looking up at the hardened man as he spoke, "you forgot to look somewhere else." The father was terrified, and asked, "Which way, child?" "You forgot to look up to the sky, to see if God noticed you!" The reproof was too well deserved not to be received with patience, and father and son went home with an empty bag.

When the child is introduced to Jesus three things take place. *He believes in the love of Jesus; he reciprocates the love of Jesus; he imitates the love of Jesus.* It is impossible to behold the love of Jesus, and have faith in it, without returning it in various ways. The child will not only become amiable, but lovely and loving. A mother was telling her little child about Christ, and that He had not where to lay His head. The child instantly said: "Oh! mother, I wish I had been there, I would have given Him my pillow." The Lord Jesus is tenderly devoted to little children because they have the *spirit of love*. The punishment inflicted but a moment before, for some childish offence, is forgotten, and the arms of affection are ready to embrace the father or mother whose painful duty it has been to administer it. Indeed, it would often seem that love became stronger after such reconcili-

ation. The love of children for their Saviour in Heaven is a real thing. Is it any wonder, then, that He loves them so devotedly in return?

"Children's prayers He deigns to hear;
Children's songs delight His ear."

Human wisdom says to a child, "Be a man!" Divine wisdom reverses the process, saying to the man who would secure God's favour, "Be a child!"

Little children have no false shame. Many grown people, who are mindful of their prayers and other religious duties when they are by themselves, would hesitate a long while before they attended to these things, if the eyes of their fellow-mortals should observe them. Hundreds of passengers were preparing to retire to rest, on board of one of the fine steamers of the Hudson, but no looker-on would have suspected any of them with being religious, so far as any outward recognition of God was concerned. In the midst of all this forgetfulness of Him, there was one person on board who was not ashamed to acknowledge his dependence on his Heavenly Father's care. It was a little boy, who, all unconscious that he was doing any unusual thing, kneeled down and prayed, as he was accustomed to do at home. Mr. Spurgeon said: "One Monday evening, I felt very weary from the Sabbath's work, and I went into the Orphanage, where the infants were." They sang a little piece, and the teacher said, "Which little boy prays for Mr. Spurgeon every morning?" They all held up their hands. He said, "Do you pray for me every morning?" They said, "We always pray for you." He said, "I felt so very happy, because, dear little souls, I am rich if they pray for me." There is something so beautiful about a child's prayer. Again Mr. Spurgeon says: "I once received into the church a little girl ten years of age. I talked a good deal

with her, and examined her carefully, more than I should like to examine adults, but as I looked into her face and saw that sweet simplicity, I thought that she never had doubts about the word of God at all. I saw her dear eyes so bright as she talked about Jesus, and her whole heart took it in as so real; yes, we must have the children, we must begin with the children."

How beautifully and perfectly is the spirit of humility manifested in little children. When Christ wished to rebuke the selfish ambition of his disciples, he took a little child and "set him in the midst of them." From that child they were taught a lesson of unselfishness and humility. So our heavenly Father now sets little children in our houses to be *our teachers*, as well as to be taught themselves. We may enlarge this incident so as to find in it a great principle of exquisite beauty, and of world-wide application; that principle is that Almighty God is constantly teaching by children. Will you who are parents think of this? Every child in your family may be as a prophet of the Lord unto you. God does not despise the minute, and the obscure, and the weak, but hangs the dew-drop of the morning upon the simplest flower in the mead, and when He has had occasion to speak to a prophet, He has declined the services of thunder, and whirlwind, and earthquake, and addressed the fainting one in a still small voice. Poor would the world be without little children. There is more of meaning in their little curious questionings than we ever apprehend. Why, the touch of a child has turned back the murderous intent of the parent who has slept with the little one in his bosom! The request of a little child has again and again been the means of turning the consideration of parents in a God-ward direction. In innumerable

instances, the child-life which God has placed in a family has been the means of uniting that family in the holiest and tenderest bonds, and preventing developments of depravity which would have involved the household in irreparable ruin. He is old indeed who cannot receive instruction from a little child.

Our religious teaching has not always produced the amiableness, the humility, the loveliness in children which it ought. But it is only when they have been spoiled by foolish flattery and over-indulgence, that they become proud. Naturally they shun observation, and blush at compliments. It is painful to see sometimes even in Sunday Schools sad exhibitions of pride, and impetuosity, and want of submission. One of the principal intentions of all schools should be to make children exhibit humility and love.

"Lord, forever at Thy side
Let my place and portion be;
Strip me of the robe of pride,
Clothe me with humility.

"Humble as a little child,
Weaned from the mother's breast,
By no subtleties beguiled,
On Thy faithful word I rest."

A FEW OBSERVATIONS ON EARLY CONVERSIONS MAY SUFFICE. The moment children are capable of sinning—breaking God's law—that moment they are capable of repenting, of turning to God, of understanding the doctrines and precepts of the Bible, repentance, faith, and a holy life. Children, taught as they should be from early infancy, know and feel "that it is an evil and bitter thing" to sin against God, and that wisdom's "ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

"Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined." A

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young lady in a Sunday School, a short time since, asked her class how soon a child should give its heart to God. One little girl said "when thirteen years old," another "ten," another "six." Then, at length, the last child in the class spoke: "Just as soon as we know who God is." "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me." (Prov. viii. 17.) Parents, where is your faith? "According to your faith be it unto you." "All things are possible to him that believeth." "Seek first," for your little ones, "the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all things shall be added unto you." O it is a

"Delightful task to rear the tender thought,
To teach the young idea how to shoot,
To pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind,
To breathe th' enlivening spirit, and to fix
The generous purpose in the glowing breast."

Samuel was a little child when he ministered unto the Lord, and heard His voice. "And he grew, and the Lord was with him," and "the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel at Shiloh." A sweet picture! A ministering child! Experience has taught me to have more faith in children than in adults. Children are more like God than men and women are. Children are unsophisticated, straightforward, simple, truthful, joyous, loving; adults are often crooked, crafty, double-minded, selfish, moody, rancorous and vile. I sympathise with the poet when he wishes that he could go back to God through his "yesterdays." Alas, there is no way to Heaven except through our to-morrows; and as we get older by travelling through these to-morrows, we often lose the simplicity and beauty of childhood, and engross ourselves with engagements which tend rather to degrade and unfit us for the high society of Heaven. I implore you, therefore, who have the

charge of juvenile training, to be careful how you exercise your function; never forget that even a child may be a minister in the temple, and that it is never too early to clasp young hands in prayer, and teach young lips to adore the name that is above every name.

Paul, speaking of little Timothy, says, "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." These are examples left on record by the spirit of grace, to teach us what may be done in the strength and wisdom of the Most High. The Holy Spirit never strives more powerfully than in early childhood. The late Countess of Huntingdon was only a little child when she gave her heart to Christ; and she was not only rich in this world, but eminently "rich in faith, and an heir of the kingdom." Who can read the early conversion and life of the wife of President Edwards, and doubt her being a child of God? Or the thrilling narrative which is given of Phœbe Bartlett, a child but five years old? For seventy years she testified to God's love in revealing Himself to a child. In the late memoirs of the Rev. Dr. Justin Edwards, it is stated that the heavenly conversation and christian spirit manifested in her last sickness, were the means of spiritual life to this eminent servant of Christ. One who has long been a "Mother in Israel," and whose deep spirituality and holy life has given her an extended influence of the happiest kind, was wont to say "she could not remember the time when she did not love Christ, and find her greatest delight in doing His will." In her life and in her death she has given the most satisfactory evidence of religion, pure and undefiled.

In judging of the genuineness of children's conversions, we must remember that they are but children. Do not expect

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a converted boy to be a pious man ; he is yet only a boy. Like a boy, he loves to play, and ought to play. A little girl was walking home from church, holding on the hand of her mother, who was walking with a lady talking. The little girl heard her mother say, "I think Sophie is a Christian." She was astonished at this. Sophie a Christian ! She was a child very much her own size, and near her own age ; and this little girl played with her every day, and never knew that she was a Christian. She had an idea that a Christian child should be very sober and quiet, and not care for play—care only for reading the Bible and other good books. She thought to herself that she would watch Sophie and see if she acted like a Christian. Next day she found that Sophie was bright and cheerful and as much interested in play as ever. She helped her little friend kindly when she needed help. Her face flushed as she kept back the impatient word, as her little friend vexed her. And when her mother called her to do an errand which she did not like to do, she went without a word of complaint. So the little girl saw that Sophie was a Christian, and she longed to be one herself.

"Come hither, little Christian,
And hearken unto me ;
I'll teach thee what the daily life
Of a Christian child should be.

"He should say when he ariseth,
'From evil and from harm,
Defend Thy little child, O Lord,
With Thy protecting arm.'

"In all his daily duties
He diligent should be ;
And say, 'Whate'er I do, O, Lord,
O; let it be to Thee !'

“When the little Christian playeth,
He should use no angry word;
For his little fellow-Christians
Are members of the Lord.”

A Sabbath School teacher asked her class of little ones, “What have you done to follow Jesus this week?” One said, “I have prayed,” another, “I have read the Bible,” another, “I have washed the dishes,” still another, “I have been good in school,” and another, “I have kept my hands and face clean.” All these were right answers, for we are to let our religion be seen in our daily life. A little bootblack polished a gentleman’s boots very nicely, and the gentleman said, “Do you think that will please me?” The boy said, “I don’t know; but I think it will please my Father in Heaven.” “Poor fellow,” said the gentleman; “then your father is dead, is he?” “Oh, no,” said the boy; “I don’t mean that. My Father up in Heaven is God.” “Then,” said the gentleman, “you think that blacking my boots so nicely will please God, the Heavenly Father, do you?” “Yes,” said the boy, “I think God is pleased to have us do everything the best we can.”

I will add just one more illustration of the daily life of a Christian child.

During a time of famine in France, a rich man invited twenty of the poor children in the town to his house, and said to them, “In this basket is a loaf for each of you; take it, and come back every day at this hour till God sends us better times.”

The children pounced upon the basket, wrangled, and fought for the bread. Each wished to get the largest loaf, and at last went away without thanking their friend. Francesca alone, a poor but neatly dressed girl, stood modestly apart, took the smallest loaf which was left in the basket, gracefully kissed

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the gentleman's hand, and went away to her home in a quiet and becoming manner. On the following day the children were equally ill-behaved, and Francesca this time received a loaf that was scarcely half the size of the others. But when she went home her sick mother cut the loaf, and there fell out of it a number of bright silver coins.

The mother was alarmed, and said, "Take back the money this instant, for it has no doubt got into the bread by some mistake."

Francesca carried it back, but the benevolent gentleman declined to receive it.

"No, no," said he, "it was no mistake. I had the money baked in the smallest loaf simply as a reward for you, my good child. Always continue thus contented, peaceable and unassuming. The person who prefers to remain contented with the smallest loaf, rather than quarrel for the larger one, will find throughout life blessings in this course of action still more valuable than the money which was baked in your loaf of bread."

OUR DEPARTED CHILDREN ARE IN HEAVEN. There is great consolation in this assurance to bereaved parents. Leigh Hunt, in his autobiography, in speaking of his dear mother's death, tells us, "Her greatest pleasure during her decay (she died of a slow consumption) was to lie on a sofa, looking at the setting sun. She used to liken it to the door of Heaven; and fancy her lost children there waiting for her." O, there is nothing sad about a child's death save the grief in the parent's heart. The little ones go right out of a world of sin and suffering to a world of joy. How many sorrows they escape, how many temptations, how many troubles! And they will meet again. Parents and children will feel themselves together, recognize each other as children and parents.

The doctrine of a recognition of spirits in a future world, may be argued by the laws of mental association, the benevolence of God, and the allusions of Scripture. Georgie* will take Eddie* by the hand, and they will come out to meet us. And O what a happy re-union it will be!

“Is it wrong to wish to see them,
Who were dear to us on earth;
Who are gone to heavenly mansions,
Who surround a brighter hearth?

“Is it wrong to mourn their absence
From the parted household band?
Should we check the sigh of sadness,
Though they're in a better land?

“Is it wrong to think them dearer
Than the many of the blest?
Who to us on earth were strangers,
Must we love them like the rest?

“And thou lov'd one who did'st leave us,
In the morning of thy bloom,
Dearest sister, shall I meet thee,
When I go beyond the tomb?

“And I think me more of others,
Of two darling little boys,
Who went up among the Angels,
E'er their life had scarce begun.

“Oh, I long once more to see them,
And to clasp them in my arms,
As I did when they were with us,
With their thousand budding charms.”

*These are the names of my two boys, who died on the 27th October and 11th November, 1880, at St. Andrew's Manse, Stratford, Ontario: the former aged 7 years, 1 month and 3 days; the latter aged 5 years and 26 days.

There was a little boy, in one of our Sunday Schools, named Georgie McCallum. He was a thorough boy, very fond of play. He was only ten years of age when he died. When the days of sickness came suddenly, and he was told that he would not get better, he said, "Jesus alone can save me, Jesus will save me, He has saved me. Don't cry, mamma, I shall go right straight up to Heaven." And then they gave him a glass of water to cool his hot lips, and he said, "I shall soon take a draught from the water of life." In those days "Rest for the weary," was a new hymn, and he had learned it; and in a perfect ecstasy of soul, in his last hour, he cried out:

"In the Christian's home in glory,
There remains a land of rest,
Where the Saviour's gone before me
To fulfil my soul's request."

And turning to his parents he said, "There is rest for you, papa; there is rest for you, mamma." Then putting his hands over his heart, he said, "Yes, there is rest for me." And he asked them to read the twenty-third psalm, and then he said: "Now I wish you would turn the bed, so I can look once more out on the foliage and see the sun set." They did so, and he said: "I do so wish Jesus would hurry, and come and take me home to rest." They said to him: "Why, Georgie, are you not willing to await the Lord's time?" "O yes," he said, "I am; but I would rather Jesus would come, and hurry, and take me." And so, with a peace indescribable, he passed away to the "realms of the blest." Ah, I often think of his bright smile as he lay dying, and of his little grave. But he is in Heaven, in glory, and peace, in the Christian's home he loved so well.

At the close of 1869, I visited a boy in his fifteenth year, who was gradually sinking into the grave. I

shall never forget my first visit to him. As I told him of Jesus—how kind and tender He is to the little lambs, and how willing to receive this dear boy, and make him His child, and as I unfolded the way of salvation—how eagerly he caught at the truth that Jesus loves and died for the young! I left Charlie (for that was his name) praying that God would bless His truth, and lead by His Spirit this dear boy to give himself to Jesus. I visited him next day, and with a smile he welcomed me. "Oh," he said, "I do love Jesus; I love you, and mother, and father, but I love Jesus best. Oh, to think of His loving me;" and amidst his suffering and sickness, which was very great, he prayed so simply and beautifully, "Jesus, you can do everything; you can save me; you know you can. Oh, do give me a new heart, and take me to Heaven. Do, Lord, you know you can. Oh, do give me it, for Christ's sake, Amen." I said, "Do you think Jesus hears you?" His answer was, "Oh, yes, I know He has heard me. Before you came to see me I used to cry about death. I did not like the thought of dying, but I don't care now. I don't want to get well. Don't cry. I can't cry, I am so happy. Mother, I hope you will come to Heaven, and father, and all. I want to see my little sisters; they are up there." After I had given him some food, and moved him, he said, "Oh, thank you, do come again to see me." I said, "Yes, I will. See how kind Jesus is, He gives you friends, and those about you who love you." "Yes," he replied, "ain't he kind?" One Sunday I was with him; he was much worse; we talked of the rest above, of the joy of the Angels. "Oh," he said, "I am going to be such a bright little spirit up there; O mother, do come too." Turning to me he said, "I wish you could go through death with me." "No, dear boy,"

I replied, "I must leave you at the edge of the river; you will find it all light, for Jesus will hold your hand and lead you safely through;" and as we prayed together that the Good Shepherd would be very near, and safely land this little lamb in the pastures of eternal bliss, he constantly joined his little voice with mine, saying, "Do, Lord; you know you can." As I arose he said, so quickly, "I do love you. I must kiss you. Do stop all night; you can lie down here beside me; you must not go until I am gone." I said, "Charlie, it will soon be my turn, I don't know how soon." "Oh," he said, "don't be long, I will come and meet you."

Next day I visited him, and said, "Charlie, are you still happy?" "Oh, yes," he answered, "Jesus is with me, I shall soon be in Heaven, I want you to sing that hymn,

Sun of my soul, Thou Saviour dear!

It is not night if Thou be near;

O may no earth-born cloud arise,

To hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes!"

and as I could not, he turned to his mother and said, "O mother, don't cry, sing my hymn." Such a holy joy and peace pervaded his countenance, he seemed very near Heaven. On my going the next evening I watched through the window this dying boy. He was spreading his arms about, and praying so earnestly; and, as he heard my step, he said, "O mother, here he comes, tell him to come quickly: I've got such a lot to say." "Charlie," I said, "you are better, I think, to see you from the outside." "Oh," he said, "the angels have been coming down, just like snow, all so white, and they are come for me; I do so want to go; don't you see them?" And his face was lighted up with joy. Surely, had our eyes been opened, we should have seen that he was surrounded

by happy spirits, waiting to carry him to their happy home. Solemn indeed it was to watch by his bed, and wipe the great drops off his face, and seek to soothe and cheer him, as he passed through the valley of death. The next evening I found him nearly gone; sleep had at last come, and soon all would be over. His voice failed him, and about eleven o'clock we thought he was gone. All at once he opened his eyes, and, by signs, asked me to give him some tea. I held him up and he drank a cupful. I then laid him down and said, "Charlie, you will go to sleep now, and perhaps wake in Heaven." "Heaven! Glory!" he whispered, and said no more.

I felt sure his happy spirit would soon be in Heaven. He lingered on till next morning, Dec. 9th, 1869, and as I looked upon him still and cold, I thought of him up there, and how happy he must be with Jesus. Yes, he is gone, and the wish expressed, "Don't be long," often crosses my mind. Soon, oh! how soon we shall go! One by one departs; not lost, but gone before. I followed the dear boy to the grave, and cast a last look at the coffin that contained all that was mortal of **LITTLE CHARLIE**.

"Around the throne of God in Heaven
Thousands of children stand,
Whose sins are all through Christ forgiven,
A holy, happy band,
Singing glory, glory, glory!"

"On earth they sought the Saviour's grace,
On earth they loved His name;
And now they see His blessed face,
And stand before the lamb
Singing glory, glory, glory!"

"Father, here am I, steer straight to me." So cried the son of a gentleman in England, who for the bene-

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fit of his health was on a visit at a well-known watering place. He left his little son with the servant on a point of land, while he in a small boat took a short trip out to sea. While absent, a thick fog had arisen where he had left his child; for a long time he sought for his little son, but sought in vain. The son, hearing his father, but not able to see him through thick clouds of vapour, cried, "Father, here am I, steer straight to me." Soon after this incident the son died, and his spirit was safely landed in the port of glory. Some time after the death of the son, the father (who was not a Christian) imagined he could hear the voice of his child saying, "Father, here am I, steer straight to me." The father felt his need of pardon, and sought it through faith in Christ, and lived in the enjoyment of a bright hope of meeting his son in Heaven.

Dear reader, are there not those who were once dear to you in Heaven? It may be a mother, who, when with you, led you to her closet, and with your hand in hers, fell on her knees, and taught you to pray in the name of Jesus. Looking down from the region of light, she is saying, in effect, "Son, or daughter, here am I, steer straight to me." Or it may be a father, who watched over you in the days of youth. You stood by his bed-side when his soul was passing away to Heaven, and heard him pray that God would bless you with pardon. Hear him saying, as he looks from his shining seat in the city of the great King, "Here am I, steer straight to me." It may be a child at whose death you wept as if your heart would break; or the kind sister, or loving brother, or Sabbath School teacher who instructed you, the minister that warned you—these are with Christ, and are saying to you in their past lives, "Come straight to us." In union with those, there is

God upon the throne, Christ upon the cross, the Holy Spirit in your heart, all crying, "Come;" can you, will you, dare you refuse such a united invitation? I beseech you to think about your precious soul; think of the hell you will shun, the Heaven you will gain by going to Jesus: go to Him now, go by prayer, by faith receive Him into your heart, and you shall prove what millions more have proved, that

"'Tis religion that can give
Sweetest pleasures while we live;
'Tis religion can supply
Solid comfort when you die."

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"The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."—Rev. vii. 17.

"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."—Hebrews iv. 9, 11.

—o—

"Oh for that bright and happy land,
Where, far amid the blest,
'The wicked cease from troubling, and
The weary are at rest !'
Where friends are never parted,
Once met around Thy throne,
And none are broken-hearted,
Since all, with Thee, are one."

—*Monsell.*

"That hour for brevity a moment seemed ;
For benediction, ages. But at last
Calmly He said, The night is almost spent ;
The morning is at hand. Fearless meanwhile
Rest thou in peace. Oriel, thy guardian spirit,
Shall lead thee to those bowers felicitous,
Where now thy parents and thy babes await
My Kingdom with the other Blessed Dead !"

—*Bickersteth.*

CHAPTER V.

Heaven's Description of the Character and
Blessedness of the Sainted Dead.

Memorial Sermon Preached in St. Andrew's Church, Chatham,
on the occasion of the Death of Mrs. Muirhead, wife of
the Hon. Senator Muirhead.

—o—
“And I heard a voice from Heaven saying unto me, Write,
Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea,
saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their
works do follow them.”—Rev. xiv. 13.

We are accustomed to speak of our world—and the expression is Scriptural and correct—as the land of the living, thus distinguishing it from the land of the shadow of death, where the darkness of death and the grave reigns in solemn silence and awful gloom. Our world, however, which we designate the land of the living, might, with as much propriety and truth, be called the land of the dying; for what countless numbers have died in our world! How have “earth to earth, and ashes to ashes, and dust to dust,” been accumulating through all past generations; and what instances of mortality do we witness, what death-beds do we surround, what tolling bells do we hear, what opening graves do we see, and what bereaved mourners do we behold going about the streets!

Death is, indeed, making his destructive ravages amongst our fellow-creatures. He enters our churches, and congregations, and families; and he removes from the sight of the eye, but not from the recollec-

tion of our memory, or the affection of our hearts, our beloved relatives and friends. By his cold hand and relentless power, they are consigned to the gloomy mansion of the tomb; and in the sorrow of our souls, like one in ancient times, we go unto their graves to weep there. But were they the followers of Jesus, the children of God? If so, then we sorrow not as those who have no hope, for we have the bright hope, the Scriptural assurance, that they are with Jesus. The angels of Heaven conducted their ransomed spirits from the death-bed to the throne, the mansions of Heaven have received them, the harps of Heaven are sounded by them, the songs of Heaven are sung by them; and whilst we see the victorious palms of Heaven in their hands, and the golden diadems on their heads,—what is the voice from Heaven which we hear respecting them in the language of our text?

It is not the first time that a voice from Heaven on such a subject has been heard. David, the psalmist of Israel, heard the voice of inspiration from Heaven, and that voice said, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." The prophet Isaiah heard a voice, and it said, "He will swallow up death in victory." The prophet Hosea heard a voice, and it said, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death." The apostle Paul heard a voice, and it inspired his heart, his pen, his tongue, and he exclaimed, with ejaculation and triumph, "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." And the apostle John, in the cheerless and desolate Isle of Patmos, heard a voice from Heaven. What visions opened on his sight! What scenes he witnessed! What celestial harpers he saw! To

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what redemption songs he listened! What ransomed saints he beheld on Mount Zion, enraptured with joys, encircled with glories, their crowns radiant as the light, and their robes washed to snowy whiteness in the blood of the Lamb! There they stood before the throne of Jesus with perfection within them, Heaven around them, eternity before them, and glory all over them; and whilst John gazed on their glories, and listened to their songs, he heard a voice from Heaven, saying, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

"How bright these glorious spirits shine!
Whence all their bright array?
How came they to the blissful seats
Of everlasting day?"

"Lo! these are they from sufferings great,
Who came to realms of light,
And in the blood of Christ have wash'd
Those robes which shine so bright.

"Now, with triumphal palms, they stand
Before the throne on high,
And serve the God they love, amidst
The glories of the sky.

"His presence fills each heart with joy,
Tunes every mouth to sing:
By day, by night, the sacred courts
With glad hosannahs ring."

NOTICE THE CHARACTER OF THE SAINTED DEAD AS HERE DESCRIBED. Their character was that of vital union with Christ. The Scriptures represent this union by a great variety of figures. It is compared to the union of a building with its foundation stone—its existence depends upon it; to that of the branches and the vine—the strength, foliage, fruit, life of

the one, depends upon the sap, it derives from the other; to that of the spirit and the body—the former being the source of animation, the impulse of activity, and the guide of the movements of the latter. These figures confessedly indicate a union the most close and the most vital.

Jesus has the first place in the Christian's affections. The glorious Redeemer reigns in the innermost shrine of his heart. To him, "He is fairer than the sons of men, the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely." He is enamoured of His transcendent perfections, and wishes forever to sit at the feet of the great Teacher. He loves His name, he glories in His cross, he triumphs in His grace. He inscribes "Holiness to the Lord" on all that he has. He devotes his time, his talents, his possessions, his money, his all to the glory of the Saviour. He presents his body a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, feeling that it is but a reasonable service. His hands work for Christ, his pen writes for Christ, his feet run swiftly in the way of Christ's commandments. Let his tongue cleave to the roof of his mouth, if he does not plead for Christ! Let his lips be silent, if they do not utter the praises of the blessed Saviour that laid down His life, and shed his precious blood for the salvation of a perishing world! Let his ears be forever closed if they do not listen to the sweet voice of his Beloved! Let his eyes be sealed in total blindness, if they are not turned toward Jesus in holy confidence, in child-like dependence, in grateful adoration. The faculties of his mind are consecrated to the glory of the Saviour, and the advancement of his cause. His memory treasures up the Redeemer's last behest and parting promise. His imagination revels amid the unsearchable riches of his compassion. By the glowing imagery of the Bible, he is taught to associate ideas of Jesus with

the fragrance and beauty of the rose, with the grace and modesty of the lily, with the strength of the rock, and the splendour of the sun. His judgment is exercised in devising schemes by which the gospel of Jesus may be spread, and the honour of Jesus promoted. His whole desire is that the Redeemer may see of the fruit of the travail of His soul. His business on earth is to do his Heavenly Master's will. He feels that there is nothing at all worth living for but this. He is ready to be anything, or to do anything, if he can promote this great result. Listen to his soliloquy: "Let the warrior fight for renown; let the sensualist live for pleasure; let the worldling struggle for wealth; let the multitudes live unto themselves, and serve Satan:—as for me, 'I will serve the Lord.' Blessed Jesus, reign thou in my heart king supreme, without a rival, for ever."

Such a character implies a judicial and a moral change. Men were not born in this state. They are not naturally "in the Lord." "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature." Hence the character of the sainted-dead, as here described, underwent a great spiritual change before they were prepared for the presence of their Lord.

They die depending on the merits of the Lord, and glorying in His Cross. In this respect they die as they lived. What is their life but a life of dependence on Christ? They are conscious of their utter unworthiness—discover their depravity and guilt—cast themselves at the feet of Divine mercy, and their prayer is, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" O, how do they welcome Christ in their hearts, as their rock, their refuge, and their redeemer! Nothing is so much the object of their desire as to be found in Him and partake of His righteousness. They trust in His wisdom for guidance—in His power for protection—in His righteous-

ness for justification—in His blood for pardon and salvation. They look to His cross as the ground of their hope, the theme of their praise, and the object of their glory. Their entire confidence is in that “precious blood” which has procured for sinners the blessings of salvation, and has raised all the glorified redeemed to Heaven. It is thus they depend on Christ, feeling that they have no other foundation of hope.

As they make progress on their way to Heaven, the more simple does their dependence become; and the nearer they approach the end of their pilgrimage, the more deeply sensible are they of the need of Christ, and the more humbly do they rely on Him. They feel that the Cross, which is the source of their salvation, is also the means of their triumph; whilst they listen to the voice of their Lord, “Conquer by this.” And by that Cross they do conquer; and when all their enemies are subdued, and their victories won, they will come into His presence and sing, “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name be all the glory.” This will be their song on their dying day. Their eyes then will be directed to the cross, for in that cross they glory whilst they live and when they die. Amongst the last expressions which they utter is the noble language of Paul, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Jesus Christ.” Nay, sometimes when they are dying, not only do they have brighter views than they have ever previously had of the crown of glory, but brighter views by far than they have ever previously had of the cross of Christ. Oh! never have they felt so powerfully the attractions of the cross as when they have been actually putting forth their hand to receive the crown—that crown which had never been theirs but for that

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blood-empurpled cross.

The last thing which they see on earth is the cross of their Lord, on which He died, and the first thing which they see in Heaven is the throne on which He reigns. Thus, as they live, so they die, depending on the merits of their Saviour, and glorying in His cross. Their departing spirits they commit into those hands which were once nailed to the cross, but which now wield the sceptre of the universe, and in those hands their immortal souls are safe for eternity; whilst concerning them the voice from Heaven is again heard, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

"Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes,
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies;
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee:
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me!"

They die renewed by the Spirit of the Lord. They have the Spirit of Christ, and that Spirit was given to them on the day of their conversion. What a day was that, when the Spirit first came to them! What was their moral condition, their spiritual state? He found their understandings darkened, their affections depraved, their hearts at enmity against God—their sentiments and desires, principles and purposes, in opposition to the purity of the Divine character, the holiness of the Divine law, the nature of the Divine claims, and the demands of the Divine word. He did not, however, leave them in the state in which He found them. He taught them to mourn over their sins, to pray for pardon, to hunger and thirst after righteousness, and to depart from all iniquity. By His power they are raised from death to life, from sin to holiness, from the world to God. They were spiritually united to Christ, loved His name, obeyed His command and followed His example. They gave

all diligence to make their calling and election sure. What progress they made in the path of piety! Practically regarded, and personally exemplified by them, was the exhortation of the apostle, "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." They cherished and cultivated the graces of the Christian character, constraining all to take knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus!

Under the influence of the Spirit, who renewed their hearts, how they meditated on the truths contained in the Bible which he has inspired; how they delighted to attend the sanctuary where they could hear of the unsearchable riches of Christ; and how habitually they felt the attraction of that throne at which they could pour out their hearts before God, and hold fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ—a fellowship which they regard as one of the highest privileges on this side eternity and Heaven. How ardently did they love, how devoutly did they adore, and how highly did they honour the Spirit, who regenerated their hearts and led them to Jesus, and who had implanted the principles of holiness in their minds, and commenced a work in their souls the complexion of which would open for them the pearly gates of Heaven, and minister unto them an abundant entrance into Christ's everlasting kingdom. Favored with His renewing influences, they also joyed in the rich consolations which He imparts. From the period of their conversion to the day of their admission to glory, the Holy Spirit continued with them, attesting to their adoption, helping their infirmities, aiding their devotions, and purifying their souls. The work of grace, commenced in their hearts, He carried on till their dying day arrived. In that day they exchanged sorrow for joy, grace for glory, the wilderness for Canaan, earth for

Heaven; and the voice from Heaven said, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

Dr. Norman McLeod said: "There must be in Heaven a countless sum of things I cannot comprehend, conditions of being, memories and hopes, sights and sounds, panoramas of glory, a society vast and infinitely exalted. All this I understand not now. Nevertheless there is One whom I do know—Jesus Christ. He is the author of all, the ruler of all, the adored of all,—and is my brother, bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh. The person is a real man, with human heart and affections. This person lived for years here, and knows me and all my nervous, infirm feelings better than any other. He remembers I am dust. This person once was grieved, and wept, and agonized, and prayed the cup might pass from him. This person sympathized with and comforted men like himself, full of infirmity, saying, 'Let not your hearts be troubled.' This person lived and died for me, and I belong to Him, and His joy is one with my salvation as a believer. There is no such tender heart on earth, as His who is in that place; and He is waiting to receive me, just as He has received every one there, men and women, who once were anxious and concerned and filled with wonder as I am. He is Heaven! O Lord, into thy hands I commit my spirit; and into thy hands I commit my dearest, yea the tender child of my bosom. Take me to thyself, for where thou art there and there only I wish to be. It was thus that Jacob, when he had gone into Egypt, then an old man and an humble shepherd, who had lived all his life among the quiet hills of Palestine, was not awed by the great court of Pharaoh, the magnificent palace and all the splendor which surrounded the greatest monarch of his time. All was lost in thought: Joseph is alive, and he is there;

and when he entered those gorgeous halls, he saw nothing else, thought of nothing else, than his beloved, as he fell on his neck with tears of unutterable joy.

“And yet this simplest view of Heaven, on which all can repose, urges to the contemplation of what it involves. Our being with Christ evidently infers fellowship with Him. It must be so. Only think,—that you or I, or any one we love, shall, during the life of God, world without end, be like Christ! And yet this is implied in going to Heaven, in being happy, in being with Christ! and there is no neutral ground between this and a soul unlike Christ in everything, and full of all evil.”

OBSERVE, ALSO, HEAVEN'S DESCRIPTION OF THE CONDITION OF THE SAINTED DEAD. They are blessed, for they die *prepared for the presence of the Lord*. They were the followers of Jesus while on earth, and they are now prepared not only for His presence at His solemn tribunal, but to stand before His mediatorial throne amid the glories of His Heaven. There is worship in His presence: and they are prepared to engage in that worship; to serve Him day and night in His temple, and to sing glory, and honour, and praise, and power, unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever.

In the hour of death He will come to receive them to Himself. His angels will minister unto them—the light of His countenance will shine upon them—breezes from the land of Beulah will refresh them—the glory-summit of Mount Zion will rise on their view, and, attended by the shining ones, they will pass over the river, and enter the presence of Jesus. It was thus with departed saints, and some of you have witnessed this, for you have seen the followers of Jesus in dying circumstances. How gradually

and peacefully you saw them sink into the arms of death! They talked of Jesus, and you heard them speak of His glorious name and precious blood. With a confidence unshaken, a mind placid and serene, a hope sure and steadfast, and prospects bright and animating, you have seen them pass away. They calmly waited for the signal of departure, for the moment of triumph, the crown of righteousness and the bliss of eternity. You secretly admired that grace which can form the soul for holiness and glory; and you adored Him, the truth of whose gospel and the consolations of whose spirit can render His people blessed even in death itself.

In the day of their death, Jesus says to every one of His saints, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." To that Paradise they rise, and into the presence of Jesus they enter, and in Heaven no trial oppresses their heart, and no sorrow sits on their brow. Multitudes of them went thither through great tribulation, under the weight of which in this world they had "fainted" had they not been supported by the arm of their God. When, however, they died, they rested from their labours, and left all their tribulations on this side eternity, for not one particle of them have they before the throne of God. There is not a sorrowful countenance, not a troubled heart, not a rising sigh, not a falling tear in Heaven. There the rose of love has no thorn, the lily of purity no worm, the cup of pleasure no poison. The bliss of ransomed saints is as pure as the bliss of God. In Heaven the white robed choristers sing the new song of *unmingled* joy.

Their difficulties, distresses and afflictions are confined to the present state. These are weeds which grow with the greatest rapidity and in the greatest abundance in the soil of earth; but they can never

grow in the happy soil of Heaven; for nothing can grow there but the widespreading Tree of Life, the beautiful flowers of holiness, and the thornless Rose of Paradise. The saints above are forever delivered from the perplexities of the world, the temptations of Satan, the depravity of the heart, the inconveniences of pilgrimage, and the pains of affliction. God has wiped away all tears from their eyes—the days of their mourning are ended and the days of their rejoicing are come. The redeemed in Heaven are so perfectly holy that they are represented as “without fault” before the throne. Their disembodied spirits are so free from every particle of pollution, and their robes washed so white in the blood of the Lamb, that no one unacquainted with their history would for one moment imagine that those snow-white robes were ever stained with pollution or crimsoned with guilt. And in the presence of their Lord the perfection of their bliss is equal to the perfection of their purity. There they glide through the waves of life without one unpropitious gust; their sea is a sea of glass, smooth and clear, reflecting evermore the moral glory of the upper heavens. They are all glorious within, and all glorious without. All is glorious above them, beneath them, and all around them. When they walk it is amid scenes of glory; when they sit it is upon thrones of glory; and as they sit, crowns of glory are flashing from their brows; and the very sunbeams of their glory throw the radiant light of illustration on the expression, “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.”

“Jerusalem the golden,
With milk and honey blest,
Beneath thy contemplation
Sink heart and voice opprest.

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I know not, O, I know not,
 What joys await us there ;
 What radiancy of glory,
 What light beyond compare !

"They stand, those halls of Sion,
 All jubilant with song,
 And bright with many an angel,
 And all the martyr throng.
 The Prince is ever in them ;
 The daylight is serene ;
 The pastures of the blessed
 Are decked in glorious sheen.

"There is the throne of David ;
 And there, from care released,
 The shout of them that triumph,
 The song of them that feast ;
 And they who, with their Leader,
 Have conquered in the fight,
 For ever and for ever
 Are clad in robes of white.

*"O sweet and blessed country,
 The home of God's elect!
 O sweet and blessed country,
 That eager hearts expect!
 Jesus, in mercy bring us
 To that dear land of rest ;
 Who art, with God the Father,
 And Spirit, ever blest."*

Their blessedness is in rest from all trying labour. And yet, activity is very pleasant. There is much that irradiates life in enterprise, in planning, in energetic execution; and when one is in health and strength, even endurance becomes a manly pleasure, and men look back upon the things which they have suffered, frequently, with a conscious gratification. But in all

work, in this world, there is the friction, there are the perplexities, there is the imperfect result, there is the mistake, there is the sin, there are a thousand hindrances. We are working with men who are imperfectly sanctified, and we are ourselves their un-sanctified companions. We are in everyway working in such a manner that the braver and more aspiring a man is, the more does he feel the checks, the hindrances, and the imperfections of his labour. Now, "blessed are the dead who die in the Lord;" for they rest from that part of their labour which is time-worn, and which is imperfect from want of knowledge, or from stress of temptation or of passion.

Their blessedness is in the influence of their work. "Their works do follow them." While Bunyan lived he was but as a mustard seed; now he is a great cathedral tree, in which ten thousand voices are lifted up in laudatory and grateful song! Is Shakespeare dead? Is Milton dead? Is Wordsworth dead? Is Watts dead? Is Wesley dead? Is Dante, or Goethe, or Homer, or Virgil dead? They were never on earth as much alive as they are now, going up and down, to and fro, through the times and ages, still chanting their joyful strains, and imparting instruction. The world was never so full of them as it has been since they ceased from their external work. They rest from their toil, and their works do follow them. "That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die!" No living man is complete. While your heart throbs you are undergoing a process. Time will mellow you; age will tone your character. Do not urge society to give you a verdict just now. Society is too heated and confused to pronounce upon you with the accuracy of deliberation and the dignity of repose. Death will befriend you. A most solemn and righteous estimation of character is often

introduced by death. We who believe that the wheel of retribution never pauses, that death does but give us new aspects of life, that there is a higher empire than the flesh, that the absolute and final adjudication is yet to supervene, should carry ourselves with the patience, the calmness, the dignity of men who cannot die! To-day is not the measure of my brief eternity; there is to-morrow coming, coming from the heart of God, coming from the clime of light, coming with justice in its hand and mercy on its lip, and to that better day I must commit my cause.

Not only do our works follow us on earth, but I believe that they follow us into the other life. Our works of faith, and labours of love, shall not go unrewarded. We shall receive full compensation for all our toil. He will graciously reward His faithful ones for that which, without Him, they could not possibly have done. Yes, he who applauded Mary's deed of affection, and declared it should be published in all the world, and will yet acknowledge it, when He comes to render unto all according to their works, will not permit a word spoken in season for Him, or a cup of cold water given in His name, to be forgotten. The Sabbath school teacher, the tract distributor, the sick visitor, as well as prophets and apostles, deacons and evangelists, pastors and teachers, will then be amply paid by His approving smile and encouraging word,—

“—Well and faithfully done,

Enter into my joy, and sit down on my throne.”

Their blessedness begins immediately after death. “From henceforth saith the Spirit.” From the moment of death the blessedness begins. This stands opposed to two errors that were current in the church as early as the fourth century. (1) That there is an obliviousness of soul until the resurrection; and to

the error (2) that there are purgatorial fires which must follow death. Men of all ages, of every degree of culture and of every form of religion have been profoundly exercised about the *where* and the *how* of the soul after death. There is scarcely another question that has such a hold and fascination upon the human mind. And yet the Bible, whilst its utterances upon the finalities of human destiny are distinct and emphatic, is remarkably reticent upon the minute details of that destiny. Even Christ, in His teachings of the future, addresses Himself not so much to the speculative fancy as to faith, and to our moral instincts.

Apart from the parable of Dives and Lazarus, there is hardly anything in His teaching concerning the state of the soul between death and the judgment. Those whom He called from the unseen world say nothing about that world. Lazarus, called back, said nothing of the spirit-world. It is doubtful whether, if he had spoken, his sisters could have understood him. All that can be said concerning this is thus expressed by Tennyson in his "*In Memoriam* ."

"Where wert thou, brother, those four days?
There lives no record of reply,
Which, telling what it is to die,
Had surely added praise to praise.

"Behold a man raised up by Christ!
The rest remaineth unrevealed;
He told it not; or something sealed
The lips of that evangelist."

But while Christ is strangely reticent upon the details of the future life, his utterances concerning the *finalities* of human destiny are wonderfully clear and emphatic. It may be that to His view the one great, underlying fact of future retribution—of "everlasting

punishment" and "eternal life"—were so momentous as to overshadow the mere accidental and minute conditions of the endless future. In that golden promise dropped from the Cross, there is a glimpse of untold possibilities of life and felicity to the saved immediately after death. That poor, dying, trusting sinner is assured of instant transition from the cross to Paradise. But what did Jesus mean by *Paradise*? Certainly not some department of *Hades*, according to the popular sentiment; some mystic region of half-consciousness, where the soul is left to linger for thousands of years between death and the resurrection; no, not any such half-way place between hell and Heaven, but Heaven itself; Christ meant *Heaven*.

In the New Testament *Hades* has always a dismal and repulsive association, and never involves of necessity the idea of an indiscriminate abode of the dead other than the grave. There is not a passage which speaks of a good man as going to it, or having any personal association with it. Whatever else is meant by Paradise promised to the penitent thief, and the blessedness promised to the sainted dead, it does not mean any part of *Hades*. The idea of a common residence of the righteous and the wicked is a relic of pagan mythology, and is a mere human fancy without any countenance from the word of God. For, as has been correctly remarked, *Hades*, which, from its derivation and classic usage, might include the whole invisible world, whenever its meaning reaches beyond the grave, always points to the place of future punishment. And it is strange that a word which, from its etymology and use, has only gloomy and repellant associations, should ever be employed to designate the abode of the righteous in a future world.

The word *Paradise* came into the New Testament

from the *Septuagint*, where it is used from Eden. By sin man lost the primeval Paradise: by the redemption of Christ the believer is restored to the favour and communion of God. And how natural that Christ, having finished the work of human redemption, should re-enter Paradise, taking with Him into its holy and blissful beauty the converted malefactor, as a trophy of His finished work. What better name for the Heaven which Christ has purchased for the believer than Paradise? If there is a second Adam, why should there not be a second Paradise?

In the Jewish conception the word was not only a name of the past, denoting some place of beauty and blessedness that lingered in memory as a lovely dream of the night, but it was a word of promise and hope for the future—the symbol of Heaven. Evidently Christ used the word according to the *Septuagint* and the current idea of the Jews, and when He promised to that poor, sinful, but penitent outcast, a place in Paradise, He meant not some dreamy place in *Hades*, but Heaven, and so understood, it opened above that dying sinner the gate of Heaven, and he went from that torturing cross to be with Jesus in Paradise. And this is the hope and the actual experience of every one "who dies in the Lord." Let no Christian falter in the conflict when so near to final victory; let no one faint under the burdens and weariness of the way, for his redemption draweth nigh. "From henceforth," not from the waking of the soul into consciousness after the sleep of centuries; not from the extinction of purgatorial fires—but from death. "Absent from the body; present with the Lord." Let no child of God say, in tones of sadness, there is but a step between me and death; rather let him say, with exultation and hope, there is but a step between me and Paradise—

“There is no death! what seems so is transition;
 This life of mortal breath
 Is but a suburb of that life elysian,
 Whose portal we call death.”

This subject speaks *comfort* to the bereaved mourner. Weep not inordinately for the good that are gone. Sorrow not as those who are without hope. Your loved ones still live; they have entered upon a state of blessedness. Death! Thou, whom the world calls King of Terrors, and feels to be such, the followers of JÉSUS need have no dread of thee. All the power thou hast is over the body; and over that not long. Thy fatal stroke on them disimprisons their spirits, and thus enables them to flee away from the encumbrances of matter and the depravities of the world, to a sphere of kindred spirits; pure, free, and blessed. Why, then, mourn the departure of the *good*? or why, if *we* are *good*, look fearfully on the day of death? “I congratulate you and myself,” said John Foster, “that life is passing fast away. What a superlatively grand and consoling idea is that of death! Without this radiant idea, this delightful morning star, indicating that the luminary of eternity is going to rise, life would to my view darken into midnight melancholy. Oh, the expectation of living *here* and living *thus* always would be, indeed, a prospect of overwhelming despair. But thanks be to that fatal decree that dooms us to die! thanks to that gospel which opens the vision of an endless life! and thanks, above all, to that Saviour friend who has promised to conduct all the faithful through the sacred trance of death into scenes of Paradise and everlasting delight.”

“Beyond these chilling winds and gloomy skies,
 Beyond death’s cloudy portal,
 There is a land where beauty never dies,
 And love becomes Immortal.

"A land whose light is never dimmed by shade,
Whose fields are ever vernal;
Where nothing beautiful can ever fade,
But blooms for aye eternal."

I often think of that holy land beyond the river of death, where the redeemed and glorified shall dwell in blissful harmony forever; and especially when the cares of life, its pains and conflicts, cast their gloomy shadows over my pathway, do my thoughts fly away to that beautiful country where peace and holiness shall forever linger with their blessed influences. I have sometimes thought that these life trials are measured out to us just to make us wish and long for a better land, where no cloud of life shall cast its shadow. If all was brightness and sunshine around our life path, we should not wish for a higher and nobler state of existence, but like the bird and butterfly, sing and dream our days away in contentment.

God has thrown out beautiful beacon lights to lure our feet to the better land, and sometimes the pearly gates of the eternal city swing open in the far distance to reveal to us the glories that cluster around the "house with many mansions."

"And while they stand a moment half ajar,
Gleams from the inner glory
Stream brightly through the azure vault afar,
And half reveal the story."

We know that Heaven is a better land than this, not only by the faint glimpses that we have caught of its eternal hills, but the unchanging word of God has declared that it is a beautiful, happy country, where there is "no need of any sun or moon," and "where all tears are wiped from the eyes." And so with the certain knowledge that it is a better land, we in fancy are ever trying to form some conception of what it really is, and how it will appear when we

pass into its peaceful realms. I fancy often that our grandest conceptions of Heaven are far short of what will really burst in eternal splendor upon our spiritual vision when the veil of mortality is rent away and we stand in the presence of "Him who hath redeemed us."

"We may not dream how sweet its balmy air,
How bright and fair its flowers,
For we have not heard the songs that echo there,
Through its enchanted bowers.

"The city's shining towers we may not see
With our dim earthly vision,
For death, the silent warden, keeps the key
That opes the gate elysian."

But it matters not if we with our dull understanding can not comprehend fully the joys of the redeemed, nor know the height and depth of eternal love, while walking in a land where death and sorrow reign. The blessed consciousness that we are journeying toward the better land where all will ultimately be revealed to us, is enough to satisfy us and fill our hearts with deep and fervent joy. Eternal life is a boon rich enough to inspire every fainting soul onward through the darkness and shadow of the world. An eternity of splendor awaits the faithful, who have borne with patience the crosses of life and journeyed meekly along the rough road. Ages of rest shall be given for every moment of suffering in the present life; crowns of glory shall be worn on the very brows where thorns now rest. Yes, there is a better land, where the dark mantle of sin shall never be thrown upon the soul—a land of unfading glory and eternal peace. Through the mystic ages of eternity its beauty will remain un-

dimmed and the mysteries of the "great unknown" will then be fully revealed.

"O land unknown! O land of love divine!
 Father all wise, eternal,
 Guide, guide these wandering, way-worn feet of mine
 Into those pastures vernal."

In conclusion, one word to sinners. Thus has your attention been directed to the blessedness of departed saints. What scriptural reason have you to hope that such blessedness will ever be yours? Do you live a life of faith in the Son of God? Do you pray? Are you walking in the path of holiness? O, look to that Saviour who is "able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him;" and who for your encouragement has graciously said, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Delay not. Time is short. Rapidly as clouds flying on the wings of the wind is your life passing away. "Now is the accepted time! Now is the day of salvation!" Pray for the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you may be regenerated, sanctified and saved. Let your daily prayer be,

"Come, Holy Spirit, come,
 Convert my heart to God;
 O lead thou me to Jesus Christ,
 To save me by His blood."

Favored with the grace of that spirit, and redeemed by that blood, you shall be blessed in time and in eternity, in life and death, on earth and in Heaven.

Annie Gray, the beloved wife of the Honorable Senator Muirhead, was born in the year 1821, in the city of Aberdeen, Scotland. Her father, Mr. Alexander Gray, was a merchant in that city, and well known among the godly of the neighborhood for his personal piety and his earnest efforts on behalf of

the religious education of the young. Annie was the second girl of the family, and was trained from childhood in the paths of virtue and religion. She was a lovely child—interesting in person—and was invested with the charm of beauty. Her parents belonged to the west parish church of Aberdeen, and, therefore, she had not only pious home training, but also the pastoral oversight and instruction of that able and godly minister, Dr. Davidson. By these means her mind was directed from infancy in the way of truth and peace. So early and continuous was the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit upon her heart, that she could not recall the time when she was not under the power of Christian truth. She was an example of the fulfilment of the promise, "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old he will not depart from it." Her filial obedience and love formed a distinguishing feature of her early piety, and she reaped its reward in the lengthening of her days, and in the love which her children bore her in return. The first stages of her childhood were not marked by any striking incidents; but she grew as a tree planted by the river of water; and prospered in all that makes life truly noble, useful, and happy. When she was about 18 years of age, she came to New Brunswick, in company with a friend of the family, Mr. Simpson, from Elgin, who had settled in Miramichi some years previous, and he happened at that time to be visiting his native land, and induced her, and some of her mother's friends, who subsequently settled in Halifax, to accompany him on his return to this country.

In the year 1844 she was united in marriage to Mr. William Muirhead, of Chatham, who has for many years been one of the largest ship owners of New Brunswick. The year of Confederation he was ap-

OUR HOME IN HEAVEN.

pointed a member of the Legislative Council of New Brunswick, and subsequently was appointed a member of the Dominion Senate, which position he still honorably fills. And through all her married life till the day of her death, she shared with him the anxieties, labours, honours and joys, of an active public career. Wherever she went she left behind her the sweet savour of a good name. She was not much seen beyond the domestic circle. Her chief care and labour were bestowed on the rearing of a large family, four of whom only survive, and who have every reason to call her blessed. In her hospitable dwelling our ministers for many years found a most comfortable home; and she was never tired ministering to their necessities. In the more private paths of charity she was no less active than in the work of the sanctuary; always thinking of, and caring for, the poor, the sick, and the distressed. During her last sickness, and after her death, it was interesting to see the poor old people, both Protestant and Catholic, about the "old stone house," with tears in their eyes, declaring that they had lost a true friend, a real benefactor. She did not live to herself. She laid out her energies in the cause of humanity. "This woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did." There was nothing stinted in her charity, nothing narrow in her sympathies. Hers was not that miserable charity which requires constant importuning and impassioned appeals before you can get it to act. Not that charity which is constantly calculating how little it can give, and yet be on good terms with conscience. What she gave, she gave from the spontaneous impulse of her own generous nature; what she gave, she gave with all her heart and to the extent of her means. Her benevolence was an overflowing fountain within.

“The quality of mercy is not strained ;
 It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
 Upon the place beneath.
 It is twice blessed ;—it blesseth him that gives
 And Him that takes.”

Throughout life, one of her most marked characteristics was, that she was never seen unemployed. The value of steady labour, and the worth of precious time, were cardinal thoughts with her ; and she laboured, according to her strength, to the very last,—yet without haste or desire of personal gain. What she did was done from simple love to God, from the sense of responsibility to Him, and from love to her fellow creatures. The greatest grief of her life was the loss of a lovely and amiable daughter, Agnes J., the beloved wife of Mr. John Sadler, who died January 14th, 1882, aged 37 years. She cherished the memory of this daughter with deep affection, and was soon called to follow her into the unseen world.

“ And the mother gave, in tears and pain,
 The flowers she most did love ;
 She knew she should find them all again
 In the fields of light above.”

Her first desire and prayer was, to see the spiritual prosperity of each member of her family ; and then, with almost equal ardour, she longed to “see the good of Jerusalem all the days of her life.” Indeed, in these two absorbing ideas, and in the wish to do good, as far as her hands and prayers would reach, her whole soul may be said to have been engrossed. She did not covet money, nor honour, nor regard, from any except the good, for either herself or her children. She wished herself to attain, and to see them attain, the one great end of life,—to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever. May her life-long

prayers be fully answered!

About a year ago, her health, which up to this time, had been remarkably firm and good, began to give way. A slow disease cast a shade over her life. She had to bear frequent pain, and to suffer from the "weakening of her strength in the way." But her sorrow never became selfish or complaining. During her last few months, her chief aspiration was to enjoy more of God herself, and to see all about her happy. In August, 1882, a rapid decline of strength, and symptoms of a more aggravated form of her malady, became apparent; and her family and friends felt persuaded that her departure drew nigh. The prospect of death, while it greatly solemnized, did not alarm her. Founded, by a life of faith and well-doing, on the eternal Rock, her house manifestly stood sure. Her diffidence, and her sense of the holiness of God, made her very careful as to the terms she used in speaking of her religious hope. The references which she made to her spiritual state implied her expectation of being forever with the Lord; and the peculiar virtues of her life shone more distinctly through the cloud of suffering and weakness. To the end she was more anxious for the comfort, and even the enjoyment, of others, than for the alleviation of her own pain. During the last few days her suffering was great; yet, through the settled shadows of death, those who were near her saw evident tokens of fortitude, patience, and peace. Her words, as to her own position and prospects, were few. On one occasion, when I read to her the fourteenth chapter of John, she suddenly raised her trembling hand, and said, "Jesus will come, and receive me unto Himself." And at a period when the end was fast approaching, and speech had almost failed, she assured me that Christ was with her "in the valley of the shadow of death."

Her few last hours were more free from suffering ; and it was evident to all that her end was peace. She departed this life on Monday, 11th September, 1882, amid the love, and honour, and blessing, of her family,—safe in the care of Him to whom she clung as her Saviour in life and death.

We cannot forbear here subjoining a few pathetic lines, written by a friend of the deceased, whose pen it is not difficult to trace. These verses were published in the Chatham newspapers.

IN MEMORIAM.

“ The ‘ old stone house ’ seems lonely now,
Though the children have their play :
The sound of their joyous voices
Makes happy the autumn day.

“ Like a mist that slowly rises
On a sunlit summer sea,
So midst all their merry laughter
Come these tearful thoughts to me.

“ And like a shower at noon-day,
When the earth is parched with heat,
So our heavy hearts are lightened
By the pattering of their feet.

“ Come sit close beside me, children,
In this dear old quiet room,
Till we speak of one gone from us
To the dark and silent tomb.

“ She left us at the Harvest-time,
When the toilsome day was o’er :
She grew weary ere the sunset,
And we saw her face no more.

“ But I know her hands were laden
With the goodly sheaves of wheat ;
And I know of burdens lightened
When the day grew faint with heat.

OUR HOME IN HEAVEN.

"The tears wept o'er her silent couch
By the poor, the sick, and sad,
Told better far than words of mine
Of the hearts she once made glad.

"And I hope, dear little children,
That some of you by my knee
May follow her sweet example
In the years that are to be.

"Till you meet her, watching, waiting,
All her face aglow with light,
Where the crooked paths are straightened,
'In the world that sets this right.'"

FINIS.

