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THE HEAVENLY PROSPECT
By Leewin Bell Williams

A synopsis on the future life,
the resurrection of the dead;
facts about the vastness of the
universe; heaven a place or
a condition; recognition and
conditions in the world to come.

Also By The Author:
Climaxes of Eloquence
Master Book of Humorous Illustrations
Financing the Kingdom
Busy People's Library
Encyclopedia of Wit, Humor and Wisdom

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HEAVEN

Think of standing on a shore
And finding it heaven!
Of taking hold of a hand
And finding it God's hand!
Of breathing a new air
And finding it celestial air!
Of feeling invigorated
And finding it immortality!
Of passing from storm and tempest
To an unknown calm!
Of awakening and finding --
"I am home!"

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PREFACE

If we knew more about the world to come, and had stronger assurance in our souls of a happy place in that realm, no doubt, we would be less reluctant to leave this world when life shall end. Some are haunted "who, through fear of death, are all their lifetime subject to bondage." We fear because we do not know. The child fears the darkness because he does not know what is in the dark. When our knowledge is weak, our faith should be strong. Why should one fear to leave a home that is subject to decay, "where flames devour and waves o'erflow," when he is going to a city "not made with hands eternal in the heavens?" Any forebodings of our departure should be more than compensated by the bright prospects of the future.

The instincts of our nature make us shrink from death; but we should think less of death and more of the coming of Christ. Not that death is ending, but rather that life is beginning; not so much of the parting but more of the meeting; not of going away but of arriving. The night with its fears is passing; God's great morning is lighting the eastern sky. When awaking from a troubled dream, we are glad it was only a dream; so, when awaking in His likeness, we shall be satisfied.

We had no conscious pain, on our part, when we were born into this world; and physicians claim there is no conscious pain in the process of dissolution. The pain belongs to others, -- the mother who bore us; the friends who linger about our bedside at the parting. Jesus spoke of death as a sleep. We welcome sleep at the close of a day of toil; likewise, when these mortal frames grow weary of the burden and heat of the day, there should be that longing to depart and be with our Lord.

Be of good cheer, think of the bliss of dying! No evil can happen to a good man, neither in life nor death. A good life, a clear conscience an honest heart, made pure by the atoning sacrifice of Christ, and knowing that we are in His keeping, should give us boldness to face the last enemy. Probably, if God had made our vision of heaven more clear, and the hope of reaching there more sure, we would all want to die young; thus thwarting God's purposes in our earthly lives, and preventing the polishing power of tribulations from making us meet for His kingdom.

In recording these thoughts on Heaven and the Universe, my purpose has been to enlarge our views of the things God has provided in the life to come for those who love Him. Our conceptions of the infinity of God, of Space, of Eternity need to be enlarged. By knowing more of God, we will love Him more and serve Him more faithfully. My old astronomy teacher told the class he thought every minister should study astronomy. This would develop his imagination and enable him to arouse the imagination of those to whom he ministered. If we grovel in the transient things of earth, we will have less desire for the things of heaven. May a study of these pages enlarge our souls and turn our gaze to higher things.

I have quoted quite freely from other writers, and I have not exhausted the material that abounds on a subject that is as broad as the universe, as infinite as God, that extends into eternity, and encompasses worlds to us unknown. These pages were not written for the critics; but for the

great mass of humanity who, in studying their Bibles, are asking perplexing questions, thinking of the home over there, casting their eyes toward the starry skies, and longing to know more about the inheritance that is reserved for them. It is my hope that many, by reading these pages, will be encouraged to "fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life."

Leewin B. Williams
Washington, D. C.

* * * * *

01 -- THERE IS A FUTURE LIFE

Implanted in the human soul is an insatiable desire to live beyond the grave. If there was no future life, our souls would not thirst for it. Brilliant minds, both pagan and Christian, have given expression to this desire:

"There is, I know not how, in the minds of men, a certain presage, as it were, of a future existence, and this takes its deepest root, and is the most discoverable, in the greatest geniuses and most exalted souls." -- Cicero.

"We are born for a higher destiny than that of earth. There is a realm where the rainbow never fades, where the stars will be spread before us like islands that slumber on the ocean, and where the beings that now pass ever before us like shadows, will stay in our presence forever." -- Bulwer.

"A voice within us speaks that startling word, 'Man, thou shalt never die!' Celestial voices hymn it to our souls; harmonious harps, by angel fingers touched, sound forth still the song of our great immortality." -- Dana.

"My mind can take no hold on the present world nor rest in it a moment, but my whole nature rushes onward with irresistible force toward a future and better state of being." -- Fichte.

"The dead carry our thought to another and nobler existence. They teach us, and especially by all the strange and seemingly untoward circumstances of their departure from this life, that they and we shall live in a future state forever." -- Dewey.

"Divine wisdom, intended to detain us some time on earth, has done well to cover with a veil the prospects of the life to come; for, if our sight could clearly distinguish the opposite bank, who would remain on this tempestuous coast of time?" -- Madame DeStael.

* * *

A Universal Desire

This desire of the soul is found in all races, savage as well as civilized. We call this blessed abode Heaven. The Buddhist hopes to find his Nirvana. This to be obtained by

annihilation of desire. To reach this he may have to undergo, as he thinks, many rebirths or transmigrations. The Mohammedan expects to reach his Paradise. The American Indian looks for a Happy Hunting Ground. Whether Heaven, Paradise, Nirvana, or a Happy Hunting Ground, these all have the idea of supreme happiness.

"To this estate all the pious of earth are tending. Heaven is attracting to itself what is congenial to its nature; is enriching itself by the spoils of earth, and collecting within its capacious bosom whatever is pure, permanent, and divine, leaving nothing for the last fire to consume but the objects and slaves of inordinate appetite and desire; while everything which grace has prepared and beautified shall be gathered and selected from the ruins of the world to adorn the Eternal City." -- Robert Hall.

In order to obtain this haven of the soul, there have been many man-made schemes. The ancients built the tower of Babel, thinking thereby to have a stairway to heaven; or they may have thought they could outwit God and escape another flood that might come upon the earth. They did not believe in rainbow Signs!

The Egyptians must have believed in life after death. They embalmed their dead, and in some cases built great vaults in which, along with the bodies, were stored food and articles they supposed the dead would need when they became alive.

Job in the early dawn of human history asked the question, "If man die, shall he live again?" He believed in a life hereafter, for he said, "Though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."

With more knowledge than wisdom, some individuals have concluded that man is no more than the beasts; that, being an animal, he will die like the animals. Other students and scholars who are just as wise, just as profound, have arrived at entirely different conclusions. They not only believe that man has a soul that will exist beyond the grave, but they, along with millions of earth's race, find comfort and consolation in their faith.

* * *

A Natural Desire

Perfect happiness is not the result of education or of environment; it is not something that may be cultivated at will. The desire for happiness is natural, it is part of man's being. By the development of the mental powers one may increase his capacity for enjoyment. Our education begins as soon as we are born. The child's earliest activity is to learn. He is a chemist, he experiments. His mouth is his laboratory; hence he subjects everything from his big toe to things in reach to the mouth test.

The mind desires to know, but the more we know the more we want to know. It matters not to what heights one may ascend in the scale of learning, he finds there are yet greater heights to climb. One's desires and ambitions constantly outrun his ability to satisfy them. Likewise, in the

acquisition of wealth, few are ever satisfied. A million dollars does not satisfy very many who have acquired that amount. There is a desire for another million, or even a billion.

The desire for happiness, being of divine origin, cannot be satisfied by change of place, environment or companionships. We often think we would be more happy if we only lived in another place, by changing our occupation, or by shifting the scene in some manner. In some instances this may be true, but often other difficulties are met and we chide ourselves for making foolish changes. Humanity is running to and fro, like the restless waves of the sea, always trying to find satisfaction with things, places and people.

This want of satisfaction is attested by prophets and seers as recorded in the Scriptures. Job says, "Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward. He cometh forth like a flower and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not." Solomon said, "Whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy . . . and behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit." Another has expressed this thought in these words: "The soil may teem with golden corn, the trees be laden with luscious fruit, the winds may bring freshness and the sun warmth; the slow kine may fatten on the field; the swift birds may throng the woods; nature may give man bread to eat; but were the earth a garden for his pleasure, a storehouse for his food, man must hunger still."

Perfect happiness must be the result of contentment, or rest, of all man's powers of intellect and will. In Chapter four of Hebrews, the writer says, "There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God." He illustrates this by the rest of God at the end of creation. Now, we know that God is incapable of being fatigued, or becoming tired, such as we experience after arduous toil. Scholars tell us that the word used in this connection is not the word we ordinarily use for rest, but is *sabbatamus*, a sacred rest. The attorney uses the word rest when he closes his argument to the jury; the evidence is all in, the law has been explained, the final appeal for his client has been made; he says, "I rest my case." Some have thought this rest to be a type of heaven; but we are admonished to "labor to enter into this rest," and "we which have believed do enter into rest." We cease our labor and rest our case with God. The warring factions of the soul have ceased; it is no longer I, but God is all in all. This brings soul satisfaction and ecstatic joy. We would like to perpetuate such religious emotions, but these subside. We cannot remain on the mountain top all the time; there is service to be rendered down in the valley; but, being unsatisfied, we yearn for the *sabbatamus* of the soul.

"When we think of immortality, we think of the satisfaction of all of man's natural cravings for perfect happiness. We do not refer to his cravings as a growing being, nor to his animal instincts. The yearning of man as an intellectual, moral, aesthetic being suggests that this life is a transition and there alone will be rest where the object, capable of satisfying his yearnings, will be found and enjoyed." -- D. J. Kavanaugh.

This is not a pessimistic view of the present life. It only illustrates the fact that there must of necessity be a life somewhere that will be satisfying and fulfill the longings of the soul. Unless this is true, there is a woeful breakdown, a missing link, in God's arrangement for His creatures. There must be some provision for satisfying the greatest desire of all, and that desire is for heaven and immortal life. The Apostle assures us, "My God shall supply all your need according to his

riches in glory by Christ Jesus." We still believe that "earth has no wound that heaven cannot cure."

* * *

Purpose Of Religion

Aside from divine revelation, man has an inherent belief that somewhere, some time, he must give an account for the deeds done in the body. St. Paul states in Romans, "The works of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another." Man believes that there is a supernatural power to whom he must make an accounting; and that there will be rewards for righteousness and punishment for disobedience. In order to secure the rewards and avoid the punishment, man becomes a worshipper. His beliefs and manner of worship make up his creed and religion. Religion among the many races and nations takes various forms; such as, Christianity, Buddhism, Confucianism, Judaism, Mohammedanism, Shintoism, and the many forms and sects into which nations and races divide. The usual test of any religion is whether by following its tenets one may reach heaven (by whatever name it may be called) when he departs this life. The emphasis is often misplaced. One may have religion and not have salvation. Many live like the devil, but want to be buried like Christians. There may be a beautiful funeral, an abundance of flowers, solemn music, and comforting words spoken by a minister to the living; but all this cannot affect the soul of the departed one. A religion that does not go farther than the cemetery is of little worth.

The primary object of religion is not to enable one to reach heaven, but to help him get rid of the one thing that will keep him out of heaven -- that is sin. If we, by divine grace, can solve the problem of sin in our lives, the matter of reaching heaven will take care of itself; and if our religion does not do that, "it profiteth us little."

Many things have been written, speculative and poetical, about heaven. There is revealed enough in the Bible to arouse our curiosity and to stimulate speculation, but much of the mystery remains hidden, lest perhaps "familiarity would breed contempt."

* * *

Sources Of Information

The sources of information in regard to heaven are largely derived from divine revelation. Nature has many echoes, analogies, figures and illustrations which we use in an effort to convey to the mind our ideas of heaven. These, at best, are dim and unsatisfactory. The deathless nature of the soul has been taught in the philosophies of earth, Christian and pagan, but the "blessed hope" belongs to the revelation in God's Word. If one does not believe there is an All Wise Creator that rules in the universe, very likely he will not believe in a life hereafter. No matter how much men may differ in their interpretations of the Bible, or portions of the Bible, the Christian world believes in a divine revelation from God to man. Hence, we must rely upon the Scriptures for our knowledge of the future life.

The idea of heaven is but dimly revealed in the Old Testament. The prophets and sages caught glimpses of immortality, but the chief benefits of a godly life were temporal prosperity. If the Israelites were faithful to God, then their flocks, fields and vineyards produced abundantly; God fought their battles for them, and they were secure in person and home. In the New Testament the emphasis is changed. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." St. Paul tells us, "This knowledge is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

We accept the Bible as a revelation from God. We believe that if God is to reward the righteous and punish the disobedient, then He is duty bound to let His creatures know what His will is. An earthly father, worthy of the name, would not punish his child for disobeying a rule which the father had never made known and of which the child had had no opportunity to learn. Much less would our heavenly Father in fairness and justice punish His creatures for not obeying laws of which they had no knowledge. We start with the premise that the Bible, rightly interpreted, is true, that there is a heaven for the righteous, and a place called hell for the wicked. This, of course, is nothing different from the teaching of all orthodox churches.

* * *

Additional Information

In addition to the knowledge of a future life which we obtain from the Scriptures, we are able, by the reasoning faculties with which God has endowed us, to arrive at certain conclusions. We believe our reasoning powers were not given to mock us and that our conclusions are true. The Scriptures reveal the love of our Heavenly Father. We have abundant proof of this all around us. The Psalmist praises the Lord, "who satisfieth thy mouth with good things." In writing to Timothy, St. Paul exhorts him to "charge them that are rich in this world that they be not highminded, or trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy." We have desires and longings that are God-given, and nothing in this life will entirely satisfy them. We have desires for food, for drink and companionship, and these all may be temporarily satisfied. But Jesus said, "He that drinketh of this water shall thirst again." Any desire that must be satiated repeatedly can never be satisfactory.

One of the greatest desires of the soul is to be happy. This is a truth so self-evident that it needs no explanation. When we consult our own inclinations we are made fully aware of this. No one desires to be miserable, unless he is so peculiarly constituted that he finds a certain amount of happiness in misery, or as some one has put it, "to enjoy poor health." He may be so blind or demented that he cannot discern the temporal aspect of the happiness which he snatches from forbidden pleasures which lead him to prolonged misery and ultimate despair.

Man is not satisfied merely by being happy, he wants to be perfectly happy. Perfect happiness is to be found in the possession of all good to the exclusion of all that is evil. Temporary possession does not satisfy man. The desire to be happy is continuous. Hence, Cicero has said, "If a life of happiness is to end, it cannot be called a happy life, . . . take away eternity, and Jupiter is no better off than Epicurus."

The mind, unaided by divine revelation, becomes assured of these facts. Heathen philosophers, who never heard of the Bible, often give expression to this thought.

* * *

Justice Demands Immortality

If there are rewards for the righteous, then we must acknowledge that many have labored, sacrificed, and died in the service of the Master who have reaped little reward in this life, except that of having a conscience of service well rendered. This thought is expressed in better words than mine by another, "The overwhelming sense of our own individual, intelligent being, which is impressed upon our soul; as well as the consciousness of the presence of the spirits akin to our souls all around us; tell us that a Supreme Intelligence, an omnipotent Will, a Purposeful Creator who we may physically know, is controlling and directing all things and beings. The fact that we recognize such a Being convinces our souls, incontrovertibly, that all nature and all humanity are but a beastly and unpardonable travesty, if all the unevenness of compared lives, all the vortexes between the suffering of poverty and the luxuries of wealth, the vigor of robust health and the decrepitude of painful disease, the brilliancy of cultivation and the dark blank of ignorance, are to go down unequalized and end in unadjusted death.

"What reason can there possibly be for all the sacrifices demanded of man, if they touch but this life only? How infamous is all sickness, weakness, strife, anguish, agony, death, and how empty are beauty, and glory, and color, and melody, vision and humor, if they enter as but disturbers of our ease, or effect only earthly life?

"If there is no revelation, if there is no future for us beyond present existence, if there is no God; then, there is no right but might, there is no law but power, there is no justice but false philosophy, there is no hope but delusion, and virtue is but a folly of self-denial. Then all our bright aspirations, our charities, affections and nobilities are empty and self-deceptions, and we are silly deluded fools who will speedily end our unreasonable course in the grave, in common with all earthly things, only to fatten the soil and cause the weeds to grow.

"The only intelligent purpose, perceptible to a reason for our creation and education on earth, is the introduction of spiritual life and the preparation for life beyond physical existence. Physical death, the effect of sin, seems to be the only method of transportation for living souls from earth to heaven. St. Paul, with his thoughts fixed on heaven, said, 'We look not for the things that are seen, but on the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.'" -- Henry S. Belden.

* * *

Analogies

In our reasoning about a future life we often resort to analogies, illustrations, similitudes, and figures of speech in order to assist our minds to grasp the truth. These are sometimes

far-fetched and may lead one astray; but they excite the imagination, and we remember pictures longer than we do abstract truth. The following are a few of these illustrations: The heathen would sigh out their upbraidings, emptiness and despair. The flowers, they said, die by the chill of winter, the spring's warm breath brings them into life again. The day declines into darkness and night, but rises again into full of day; suns set, but come again full-orbed out of the eclipse of their setting; moons wane, but wax into fullness and brightness again; but their loved ones leave them, eclipsed and lost in the darkness of death, but no spring, no morn, no rising ever brings them again.

Suppose I knew nothing whatever of the process of incubation. I find an egg in which there is a chick which, if not interfered with, in a few days will break through the shell and come out a little chicken. But I open the shell and find the chick. I note it has eyes, it has feet, it has wings. I study this creature that I have found, and I conclude that this chick was never intended to spend its life inside a shell. It is supplied with feet with which to walk, eyes to see, ears to hear. I know, if it is to spend its life inside a shell, it could never make use of these. I rightly conclude that its real life was intended to be spent where it could breathe the air, eat the food nature provides, even cleave the air with its wings; that there must be a time when it will leave off its shell with which it is now encumbered and spend its life in a larger realm.

I visit the wharf at the seaside and see a noble ship. It is equipped with powerful engines, with a rudder by which it is to be guided; it is also furnished with all the means and supplies necessary for the subsistence and comfort of those who take voyage. I know that this vessel was not made for service on the land; and I cannot believe that it was ever intended that it should sail out upon the sea and be lost beneath the waves. Although some ships do go down, that is not their purpose; they are intended to cross the waters and reach a port on the other side.

The eagle may be placed in a cage; it may be confined by a chain, but this is not its natural life. It longs to soar in the higher altitudes. Perhaps its chain will break, or its cage fail, then it will mount up with a glad scream, bidding farewell to cage and chain, and soar amidst the clouds in a happier clime.

Thus, for want of better means, we seize upon such illustrations to convey our thoughts to the possibilities and certainties of the soul. We have capacities of the soul that cannot be satisfied with a life of a few years, however well they may be spent. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most miserable," is the verdict of St. Paul.

Evidently God has made ample provision for His children in His kingdom above in the immeasurable expanse of space. We discover there is a burning desire of the soul to escape the unsatisfying things of earth, and this sin overwhelmed life, into a place where there is perfect life. This is a reasonable yearning after an essential reality. Such longings arise out of the intuitive desires of the soul to enter its foreordained and eternal home; and heaven is real as soul is real and God is real.

* * *

Limitations Of Mind

In our efforts to comprehend heaven and things eternal, we are painfully aware of our mental limitations. The human mind cannot comprehend things that are infinite; hence, we cannot comprehend God. True, we may know God by some of His attributes. We know His love by the "Golden Text of the Bible," "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son ..." Before Jesus came into the world men thought of God as a great Judge, or a great King, one who had the power of life and death over his subjects. Men were afraid of Him. Jesus taught us that God is love, and to pray "Our Father." We are not afraid of our father.

If we could comprehend God, then we would be as wise as God. God is not discovered by test-tube methods in a laboratory. We may pick up a few pebbles, but we must say as did Sir Isaac Newton, "The great ocean of truth is still undiscovered." No doubt God has many laws of which we are entirely ignorant. We may find out that miracles are produced by definite laws. For us to deny that there is such a thing is an attempt to measure God by our short measuring rod.

Nor can we comprehend space. To our puny minds we want to fix limits, to establish boundaries. The professor suddenly aroused his sleepy pupil by asking him a question: "John, is there any limit to space?" John rather drowsily replied, "Well, I guess there is." "Then," said the teacher, "suppose you go out to the limit of space and build a fence, then you climb over the fence, where would you be?" "I guess," said John, "I would still be in space!"

Again, we cannot comprehend eternity. Duration without beginning or end staggers the mind. Because we are creatures of time, we have devised clocks and chronometers by which we measure the part of duration allotted to us. But for what purpose would one need such instruments in an eternal world?

God, Space, Eternity are infinite terms. To try to comprehend them with our finite minds bewilders us. Our greatest illustrations are so feeble that they are worthless. St. Paul cries out, "O the depth of the riches both of wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out."

Many things about us with which we have to do daily are little understood. We accept these as a matter of course, and ask no questions as to the why. We know that an unsupported body falls. We are told that gravity pulls all bodies toward the earth. But what is gravity? We may stretch a rubber band, when it is released it returns to its normal shape. Why does it not "stay put?" Probably the wisest scientist cannot tell you, at least in words that you could understand. At best, his answer would be a guess. We wonder why we die, but the greater wonder is why we live.

* * * * *

02 -- CONTACT WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD

Our knowledge of the outside world comes to us through our five senses; i. e., seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting, and smelling. If one or more of these avenues is impaired; then, to that extent, our sources of information are limited. In forming our judgments or conclusions, the more of these senses we can bring to bear on a subject the more accurate, as a rule, our information or conclusions will be. We see, for instance, an apple. The first witness, the eye, says it is red, that it

is round, and that it looks good to eat. The second witness, touch, says, yes, it is round, it is smooth, it is soft, and it feels like it would be good to eat. The third witness, smell, says it certainly would be good to eat for its odor is fragrant. All three of these witnesses have not fully convinced you that the apple is good to eat. There is yet one important witness whose evidence in this case will outweigh all the others. You taste the apple, and now the opinions of all the others have been corroborated -- you know the apple is good to eat.

Not having all the facts -- sufficient witnesses -- often causes us to form erroneous conclusions. It is the old story of the two knights who fell to quarreling as to whether a shield was gold or silver. One contended that it was gold, the other just as earnestly contended that it was silver. The trouble was that one was looking at one side of the shield which was gold, whereas the other was looking at the other side which was covered with silver.

We believe our senses are true. We cannot conceive that God would give us these powers of contact with the world about us and have them mock us. If we do not really see the objects at which we look, hear the sounds that come to our ears, or feel the objects we touch with 'our fingers, then we are not certain of anything.

We have learned that our senses may deceive us, and we have learned, in many instances, to make allowance for this. Some of our senses more easily deceive us than others. We look in a mirror and see objects in front of us which really are behind us. Our hair is parted on the wrong side, our right hand becomes the left. Some actions are too swift for the eye; the "slight of hand" performer takes advantage of this fact and thereby deceives us. We hear sounds and look in one direction, when possibly the sound came to us through an open window from another direction. The sense of touch is the most difficult to deceive. But, by crossing the second finger over the first, and feeling an object by the tips of these fingers, the object seems double.

From the impressions which we receive through our five senses we may, by the process of reasoning, form conclusions. Since we cannot contact heaven by any of our senses, our knowledge from natural sources of necessity must be limited. There have been men such as Swedenborg who claimed to have had conversations with angels, and to have been admitted into the heavenly realms. Swedenborg was a remarkable man, held a high position under the Swedish government, was a voluminous writer, and made some remarkable long-range predictions which proved to be true. His influence is such that a church, teaching his doctrines, has a considerable membership. Yet the Christian world has not accepted to any great extent his teachings. Since St. John closed the canonical Scriptures with his apocalyptic vision, nothing more has appeared that has been generally accepted.

* * *

Other Sources

Many have thought that man was originally endowed with other senses. These were lost, or submerged, when sin came into the world. Richard A. Proctor, the astronomer, says in this connection: "The senses we possess are sufficient to indicate to us the possibility of existence of senses not merely more acute, but of wholly different kinds. By the sense of touch, for instance, we

can indeed recognize the feeling of heat; but it is easy to conceive of a sense (analogous to that by which light is made to teach us of the aspect of external objects) enabling man to judge of the figure, substance, internal structure, and other qualities of an object by the action of the heat-waves proceeding from it. Or again, electricity, instead either of light or heat, might be the means of communicating intelligence as to the qualities of an object. We can conceive also of a sense bearing the same analogy to sight that the spectroscope bears to the telescope. And a hundred kinds of sense, or in other words, a hundred modes of receiving intelligence about what exists or what is going on around us, might be readily conceived.

"Yet one more, we know that reason is able to range beyond the action of the senses. Man is able to assure himself that events have happened which yet have produced no direct effect upon any of his senses. By the exercise of reason he becomes as well assured of such events as though they had actually passed before his eye. An analogous power, but infinite in degree, infinitely rapid in its operation, and infinite in the extent of space and time over which it ranges, we may conceive to be possessed by a true Ruler of the universe." -- Other Worlds Than Ours.

The above was written more than seventy-five years ago, and we find that scientists have developed instruments that do just these things. The end is not yet!

Not only may we have other senses, but those we now have, no doubt, in another world, will be restored to their original powers. Some individuals now have senses that are more highly developed, or more acute, than those of others. The blind learn to detect color by the sense of touch. The musician's ear becomes highly sensitive; he is able to detect discords of which others are not aware. The sense of discernment was manifest in apostolic times. The fraud of Ananias and Sapphira, when they tried to deceive the New Testament church, was detected by Peter, and dire consequences followed the deceivers. It appears that some individuals have the "gift of healing" that others do not possess.

* * *

Mind Reading

Of late years there have been many experiments with "mind reading," or telepathy, and some remarkable results have been achieved. An event may happen once and it may happen twice, but for it to happen three times under the same conditions and the same circumstances, cannot be laughed off very easily. No doubt, further experimenting will prove that there are thought waves; and this may become a standard mode of communication.

"There is not a shadow of reason for our living on earth if the earth life is all of life we possess. We would not have been endowed with many faculties, now prominent in our earthly habitation, did they not reach through the present into eternity; for, they are not essential to our earthly existence. God is original, ultimate in perfection and reason; and, as He has given us faculties which cannot be considered as exhausted by us here, it is reasonable to believe we will use them hereafter; and, that the Spirit only uses the material and events of earth to fix and develop such faculties." -- Henry S. Belden.

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03 -- HEAVENLY ADAPTATIONS

Communication In Heaven

What language will we speak in heaven? The Scriptures do not say; and we have no other way of knowing. We may speak one language, or all speak and understand all languages. Or we may not use language at all, such as we use in this world. Anyway, there will be no misunderstanding, or confusion of tongues in heaven. The entire race speak one language from Adam until the confusion of tongues at the building of the Tower of Babel. Since then languages have multiplied on earth. But they may all be reduced to one in heaven. On the day of Pentecost the people were amazed at hearing every man speak in his own language. Peter certainly did not speak in all languages represented by the people present, but the Holy Spirit in some way conveyed the truth to those who did not speak or understand the language Peter spoke. Go where you may in the boundless kingdom of heaven, you will have no need for an interpreter in speaking with any one.

* * *

Oral Communication

Our communication with each other in this world is dependent upon a medium that must intervene between us and the one to whom we wish to speak. We may place a bell, connected with an electric battery, in a glass vacuum chamber; when we push the button we can see the bell "ringing" but can hear no sound. There is no medium, the air, to carry the sound waves to our ears. The vibrations of the air beat against the tympanum of the ear and we "hear." Where there is no such medium there can be no communication. It was a stunning question the old-time physics teacher would put to his pupils, "If a tree in the forest fifty miles away from any human being should fall, would there be any sound?" The fall of the tree certainly would produce vibrations of the air, but there being no ear to pick up the vibrations no "sound" would be produced.

If in another life we should be placed on some planet in God's "Many-Mansion" universe, and there should be no atmosphere on that planet, then we would need some other mode of communication than we now have. Astronomers tell us (and they have means by which they can tell) that the moon, and probably some of our planets, do not have any atmosphere, or even moisture. Disembodied spirits, so far as we can conceive, could not make use of such physical members, or mechanical devices, as we have in this world. It is, therefore, not unreasonable to assume that we will have other means of communication in another life. God, no doubt, will provide us with powers by which we shall know intuitively without "means of communication."

* * *

Redemption

Redemption is a broad term. It begins with the new birth, or regeneration, and includes the cleansing and empowering of the Holy Spirit. This is accomplished in this life through the merits

of the atonement of Jesus Christ. It deals not only with sin, but with the effects of sin. If we are to be redeemed from the curse of sin, then it must be complete, otherwise it would not be redemption. If redemption is not complete, then we must ascribe limitation to God. The natural conclusion would be that Satan had done a work within us that God could not undo, thus making his Satanic Majesty more powerful than God. Redemption must include the entire man -- body, soul, and spirit. Hence, we believe that in the resurrection the soldier will have the lost limb restored, the blind will have new eyes, there will be no deafened ears to hinder one from enjoying the melodies of heaven.

If the lost faculties are to be restored, and these we already know and use are to be invigorated and intensified, it naturally follows that our love, affections, and sympathies will be greatly increased. We must confess that there is ample room for improvement of this kind in our present lives!

Some one has observed that a barn-yard hen can count up to about three. It appears that her mathematical education has been sadly neglected! This conclusion was reached after making experiments with a hen with a brood of a dozen little chicks about her. Quietly one by one the chicks were slipped away. The mother hen appeared not to notice the loss until only two or three of her brood remained. Then she began to cluck, became nervous and to show signs that she had detected something wrong.

[Aside] Something like this manifests itself in the human species. Our love for the members of our family, and our friends, frequently does not extend very far. We recognize our uncles, aunts, and cousins, but beyond that they begin to fade out. Our second and third cousins are about lost in the family relation; unless, of course, they have money and are prominent in society, then we claim them to the "nth" generation!

We often group our little coterie [click, select circle, exclusive group -- DVM] of friends about us and fail to recognize all others. Not that we, like the hen, cannot count more than three, but our supply of friendship and affection is so limited that it soon reaches its boundaries. We often see this tendency manifested in the church. We are too busy with our little group to give the stranger a handshake.

* * *

The Restoration

In the Restoration, things no doubt will be different. Grace can and does do wonderful things for us, even in this life. We sing, "Makes me love everybody." We actually learn, without effort, to love the unlovely. "Old things pass away." If grace can do so much for us down here, what may we expect when this mortal shall have put on immortality! We will be changed, and our interests, our love and sympathies will extend beyond our immediate family and friends.

* * *

All One Family

Suppose when we get to heaven, ere long we meet our father. We rejoice at this meeting. How glad we are that through divine grace we have at last reached the heavenly shore! Then your father says, "I want you to meet my father," that would be your grandfather. So, you meet him and again you are glad. But he says, "I want you to meet my father," that would be your great-grandfather, one whom you may never have seen on earth. But with your renewed and expanded affections you are just as glad to meet him as you were to meet your father. So, this procedure is continued, each one bringing his father (assuming that they are all there), until you get far back in the line of your ancestors. Now you 'see one approaching, having a long beard, but with sprightly steps and his countenance as bright as the morning. You wonder who this might be. "My name," says he, "is Methuselah." You grasp his hand, and tell him how glad you are to see him. "I have often wondered," you say, "how you managed, or even cared, to stay in yonder world for 969 years." "Well," says Methuselah, "you see I got a good start. My father was none other than Enoch. A man who walked with God for 300 years." After this, you meet Enoch, one of two men spoken of in the Bible who never tasted death. (Some one has said that Enoch walked with God so long, got so far from home and so near heaven, and as it was getting late one evening, God said, "Enoch, come in and stay all night with me." Enoch went in, but found no night there, so he never came back!)

Finally, Adam himself is presented to you. You humbly bow in the presence of the head of the human race. "I am very glad to meet you, Father Adam," you say, "I have heard many hard things said in yonder world about you, but I wonder if we would have done any better than you did. We had the Bible, Jesus as Saviour, the Holy Spirit as our Guide, Comforter and Counselor, the Sunday school, the church and all the experience, helps and examples which you did not have, and we have made a mess of things. It is only by God's mercy that we ever got here. Our record is nothing to boast about. Let us forget the past and rejoice that we are here. We are sure Satan will never again have access to us with his temptations!"

Thus, it will be found that we all belong to one family. In fact, there will be no Smiths, Joneses, Williamses, or Johnsons in heaven. All will be the children of God. "For there shall be one fold and one Shepherd."

The heavenly relationship is superior to, and will take precedence over all other relationships. Even in this world we often enjoy the company of our godly friends more than we do that of some of our unsaved relatives. Ties of the new birth will be stronger than those of the natural birth. Earthly kinships will no doubt be recognized in heaven; and great joy will grow out of their reunion and fellowship; but a higher joy will grow out and be experienced as members of the heavenly family. When they told Jesus that His mother and brethren were without and desired to see Him, He asked, "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples, and said, 'Behold my mother and my brethren!'" Thus intimating that the spiritual relation is above the family relation. St. Paul speaks of "the whole family in heaven and earth"; and again he says, "Now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." He will not be known as Saul the Pharisee, or even as Paul the apostle to the Gentiles, but he will be known by what divine grace has done for him.

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04 -- IDEAS OF HEAVEN

It may be rather trite to say that individuals, and even races, have strange ideas of heaven. How some of these ideas came about it is hard to imagine. Many of them, we are sure, were not obtained from the Scriptures.

"Our ideas of heaven are often deeply colored by our condition on earth. Robert Hall suffered always from bodily pain. Richard Baxter had one prolonged fight with disease. Their idea of heaven was perfect and everlasting rest. William Wilberforce had a life of amiability and enjoyment. His idea of heaven was 'perfect love.' John Howe was majestic in thought; his conception of the 'Blessedness of the Righteous', like his life, is elevated and majestic. John Owen was devout, stately, and joyous; his meditations 'On the Glory of Christ,' as one has said, 'seem to echo the praise of the heavenly worshippers.' Bunyan had a dream transporting him near the heavenly city, so that he gained a clearer view of it. His sublime description of the city, the heavenly host, the shining ones, the celestial trumpeters in white and shining raiment, making the heavens to echo with the sound of melodious harmonies; the thronging company of bright ones, the streets of gold, the joyous thought which no mortal pen or tongue can express, stirs the soul with rapture above all scenes witnessed or imagined on earth. When he saw all this he said, 'And I wished I could be among them.' " -- Henry Melville.

* * *

Difficulty Of Expression

Our language is made up of earth words, and of course it is difficult to express our ideas of heavenly things in the language we now use. We find this difficulty in telling our religious experiences. St. Paul was caught up to the third heaven and heard "unspeakable words which it is unlawful for a man to utter." There was no "law" against speaking the words he heard, but St. Paul could find no language -- earth words -- to tell his experience. In speaking of spiritual or heavenly things we must of necessity resort to figurative language. Indeed, how else could it be We speak of "rivers of life," "temples of clay," "seas of bliss," and use many other figurative expressions. There are paradoxes, such as "losing your life to find it," "dying in order to live," "we gain by losing," "bear a cross in order to win a crown." We know about rivers, and wells, and temples. But these are all earth-words we are applying to spiritual things. We may sing of "billows of love," but what does that mean? Possibly we have stood on the seashore and watched the billows as they break upon the shore, and we try to express by comparison the rapturous joy of the soul. If we did not have some knowledge of billows, rivers, wells, temples, and seas, our language would be utterly unintelligible.

Jesus used the parable in His teaching. This is a form of figurative speech that is used to convey spiritual truth by means of natural things. He said the kingdom of heaven was like a sower, a net, a grain of mustard seed, a husbandman, a hid treasure, a merchantman seeking goodly pearls. The kingdom of heaven is not a sower, a net, a grain of mustard seed, or any of the other things the Lord used in trying to convey to His disciples the idea of the kingdom of heaven.

The Bible is not all written in figurative language. Some would make everything spiritual and thus reduce many statements that are literal to a hazy nothingness. The Book of Revelation abounds in figurative language, but only the parts that are figurative should be figuratively interpreted, and the parts that are literal should be given their literal meaning.

One of the accusations against Jesus at His trial arose on account, of His use of figurative language in regard to tearing down the temple and rebuilding it in three days. We now know what He meant. He was not speaking in reference to Herod's temple, but to His own death and resurrection. The English language has some half million or more words; if we knew and could use them all, we would still be unable to convey spiritual and heavenly truths to others, except by way of illustrations, analogies, and figurative language.

* * *

A Family Reunion

Some would have a heaven composed of material bodies, or houses, occupied by resurrected immortal material beings much the same as we have on earth. The idea is frequently expressed by our song writers, and by devout individuals. We hear it in the testimonies, in the prayers, and the public utterances from pulpits. To many, the joys of heaven seem to center around the idea of a family reunion. We want to see father and mother, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends. This may be a happy anticipation and be realized by those who are fortunate enough to reach that happy abode. But we have little, if any, Scripture upon which to base such conclusions. True, David in his grief over the death of his child, said that the child could not come to him but he could go to the child. Jesus prayed that His disciples might be with Him and behold His glory (John 17:24). Also, Jesus said, "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also."

In the Scriptures the thought is clearly conveyed that there will be fellowship with Jesus. The dying thief on the cross was told by Jesus, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." The meaning evidently was that within a few hours they would both be dead and be in a place called paradise. By consulting the dictionary we find the word paradise means a "pleasure garden," or the realm of departed spirits. This is another earth-word that was first used in relation to the Garden of Eden. Apparently Jesus used the best, the strongest earth-word He could to convey to the mind of the thief that there would be a happy relationship between them after death. We carry this thought over into our songs; thus we sing, "Where Jesus is 'tis heaven there."

The heavenly life is to be a new life based upon new relations. Earthly family institutions are not to be revived in the resurrection life. These have their several uses on earth, pass their day here, but will not have a place in the eternal world. Angel life will be the model. The angels were not born into families; each is a separate, independent creation. So will be our future, individualized and immortal life. No marriage there -- marriage, the basis of earthly human relations, a prime factor in earthly good, will not be there. No death -- the source of the deepest woe and pain, will be there. Marriage and death are earthly, they belong to earth -- not to heaven.

* * *

A Restored Eden

Again, we think of the happy abode of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden before they sinned, and think of heaven. Many look for the restoration of the Edenic state, with its flowers, fruits and pleasant things; the tree of life growing in the midst, the birds singing in the trees, animals with no vicious natures, balmy atmosphere and nothing to harm or hurt, -- oh, to get to a heaven like that! There is some Scripture to bear out this thought. In Revelation St. John, the beloved disciple, saw the "tree of life," which evidently is a figurative expression, and a "pure river of water of life." After man sinned he was driven out of the Garden of Eden and away from the tree of life. If God had permitted man to remain in the Garden of Eden and to have access to the tree of life, then, no doubt, he would have eaten of the fruit of the tree and lived forever. There would then have been a race of never-dying sinners on the earth. When we think of the evil a wicked man can do in one lifetime of sixty or seventy years, the wonder is what he could do if he retained his powers for evil and lived forever! Many men have been able in a short lifetime to accumulate a million dollars in wealth and a few probably have accumulated a billion in wealth. Such men, if permitted to live on and on would, with their increased powers and uncontrolled greed, own the wealth of the world. With their wealth they would acquire power. They would so control the economic forces of nature that the very air we breathe and the water we drink would be metered to us. It was a merciful provision that God put a limit to the length of life upon the earth.

If heaven is to be a restored Eden, and no more, then we may be subject to the same temptations to which Adam was exposed, assuming that Satan will still be loose. However, we believe that God has forever quarantined heaven against sin, for the Word tells us, "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." Peter tells us, "We look for a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." Not a restored Eden, however, beautiful that must have been, but a place Jesus has gone to prepare.

* * *

We Will Not Be Angels

The idea also prevails that we shall be angels in the world to come. In our childhood we were taught to sing,--

"I want to be an angel and with the angels stand,
A crown upon my head and a harp within my hand."

We never proved to be "little angels" here, and it is quite certain we will not be angels hereafter;

The only Scripture that remotely suggest this thought is, that spoken by Jesus to the Sadducees who did not believe in the resurrection. They asked Him whose wife the woman would be who had had seven husbands. Jesus replied, "For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven" (Mark 13:25).

Evidently the thought Jesus wished to convey was that in heaven the family relation will not exist. Angels, so far as we know, are individual creations, without birth, infancy, youth, change, or sex. Marriage was divinely instituted to perpetuate the human race. It is an earth arrangement and will pass away with earthly things.

* * *

Nature Of Angels

Since we are to be in some respects "as the angels," we are naturally interested to know about their nature. The word angel is used in the Bible when speaking of God, of man, and of an order of created beings whose chief attributes are strength and wisdom (II Sam. 14:20; Psa. 103:20; 104:4). Power is given to them to assume the human form. The primary meaning of the word is "messenger." It is always used in the masculine gender; sex, in the human sense, is never attributed to angels. Their place is about the throne of God. Their relation to the believer is that of "ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation." There are two classes of angels spoken of in the Bible: fallen angels, reserved under chains of darkness for judgment (II Pet. 2:4), and the holy angels, which class Jesus evidently had in mind when He spoke to the Sadducees. Therefore we would conclude from this that we, in common with the angels, would have eternal life; that as spirits we would have the power to take bodily form, and that we would be "as the angels" in their service and activities.

* * *

The Artist's Conceptions

We get some of our concepts of angels from artists. The holiest being that we know in this world is a pure, godly woman. The artist takes the feminine form to portray to us the idea of a holy, heavenly being, such as he conceives angels to be. Likewise, when we attempt to convey the idea of God's love, we often illustrate it by that of mother love. On account of our poverty of language we can do nothing better. This is the greatest love earth knows anything about, and we seize upon this to convey our idea of Divine love. But after we have used our most striking figures of speech and have exhausted our stock of comparisons, we are painfully aware that we have fallen far short of what the love of God really is.

"Look at the Paradise of the painter," exclaims Madame de Gasparin. "You see there depicted the idea of all ages. What are we shown? A blue field which grows gradually lighter, a sort of gulf carpeted with human heads, sanctimonious faces fastened to a pair of wings; the first row very lightly finished, the next more lightly treated, and the third only faintly indicated, the rest fading away in perspective to a disc, a point placed on an arch. In all the same expression, the same smile, the same mouth half open with the same ecstasy, and in the background, in the focus of light, the triangle with the symbolical dove."

"This sorry heaven," says another writer, "is popularized every day among children and the working classes by millions of common pictures. The Middle Ages imagined nothing better than this monastic eternity, occupied in chanting psalms in the stalls of a gigantic cathedral, built on the

summit of the firmament. Many of our most pious and esteemed contemporaries have not advanced on this point beyond the Middle Ages. Is not this frozen beatitude enough to frighten us? Would not one be ready to fly from the dull joys of such a Paradise?"

* * *

Foolish Ideas

In their effort to convey to us ideas of heaven, our song writers often carry us far astray. For instance, in a popular song the writer says, "We shall know Him by the nail-prints in His hands." What could be more absurd than that? It would seem from such ideas that we would need to hunt up some angel, or some saint who had been in heaven a long time, and have him introduce us to Jesus. Turn to the First Chapter of Revelation and read the description St. John gives us of Jesus. He says, "One like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and His hair were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars; and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." When John saw Him he fell down as dead, and it took the touch of Jesus to raise him up. Does it not appear silly to think that such a One as this, even among the millions around the throne, would need some one to point Him out; or, like Thomas, we would want to feel His hands and put our fingers in His side, before we could recognize Him?

* * *

Inconsistent Types

Our forefathers in their religious ecstasy would climb Mount Nebo, where Moses stood, and "view the landscape o'er," thus making Canaan a type of heaven. They sang lustily, --

O'er all those wide extended plains
Shines one eternal day;
Where God the Son forever reigns
And scatters night away.
I am bound for the Promised Land . . .

They looked for a heaven that was like Canaan with its honey and pomegranates, for houses they did not build, with all the furnishings! Strange type of heaven! When Joshua brought the children of Israel over Jordan into Canaan, one of the first things they did was to lay siege to Jericho; then a few days later they went to battle against the village of Ai and were shamefully defeated. This does not appear consistent with our ideas of heaven. We expect our warfare to cease when we leave these mundane shores. We will not need to displace any of the inhabitants of heaven, as the children of Israel did in Canaan, in order to make room for ourselves in heaven.

* * *

Elevation Of Man Above Angels

Man was created a "little lower than the angels." Jesus also was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, otherwise He could not have died; but He also took this lower place that He might lift the believer to a realm above the angels (Heb. 2:9, 10). From Hebrews 2:5 it appears that the rulership of the earth was once committed to the angels; but "the world to come" will not be subject to their rulership. They apparently failed in their rulership. Adam was next in authority. He was placed on probation, and failed. Jesus was tested, but He did not fail; He has qualified for the rulership and is now gone into "a far country" to make His report of His triumph over Satan and receive His kingdom. We are looking for His return with "all power and authority" in His hands. The apostle asks, "Know ye not that ye shall judge angels?" This would indicate that man would be placed above the angels.

* * *

Restoring The Lost Image

When man sinned in the Garden of Eden he had a three-fold fall: he fell physically, mentally and spiritually. Man was the final act of God's creation. God said, "let us make man in our own image," a provision that did not apply to the angels or the animal creation. God, when He made man in His own image, gave him power to exercise his own will, even in contravention of Omnipotent Will which created him. The grant of power to disobey was necessary to man's entrance into individual immortality; it was the only way in which man could be created in the image of God and become a godly creature. A free will made him a responsible son. Being made a son he was by birth consciously possessed of immortality. By sin man lost his sonship and became alienated from God. Having become a responsible creature, the great spirit realms of heaven and hell were opened to his individual choice.

Why was man made in the image of the Immortal, save to be for immortality? And how can immortal beings exist save there be a place, a country, a heaven for them? Man's reason tells him, and he intuitively knows, that he has descended from God; and, that being from God, he is immortal. Therefore he is certain death does not end his existence; and God confirms his reasoning by His spiritual touches as well as by His many blessed promises.

This image has often been explained by saying that man was created holy, and with freedom of will. This is true, but being created in the image of God has a deeper meaning than probably we have at first thought. Man was created with the capacity to receive God, which capacity evidently the angels did not have. We may ask why redemption, so far as we know, was never provided for the fallen angels. They were not created with the capacity, or ability, to receive God. Jesus Christ was a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world for us, but not for them. The holy angels from their lofty heights may have looked with awe and trembling upon the tempted pair as they saw Satan, in disguised form, approach them with suggestions of disobedience. The angels knew from experience that God is true to His word, and they expected the moment His creatures sinned to see the wrath of God poured out upon them like a mighty bolt of lightning. God had said, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." And they did die; but not in the manner which

the onlooking angels had expected. For lo! God had created man with the capacity to have the fellowship of his God restored. A ransom had been provided for him.

The posterity of Adam were not created in the image of God. We read that "Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image." If we are ever to attain unto a state even equivalent to that enjoyed by Adam before he sinned, then we must have that image restored. This God has undertaken to do through Jesus Christ our Lord. By an examination of the Word of God we learn of what that image consists, and how it is to be restored. In II Cor. 3:18, we are told, "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." In Eph. 4:24, we read, "That ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Then in Col. 3:10, we find, "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him." Thus we have three terms: "Knowledge," "Righteousness," and "True Holiness," as descriptive of that image. Not only is this image confined to these mental and spiritual attributes, but undoubtedly the physical image is included in the statement. Thus, we are "changed into the same glory," like our Lord; "renewed in knowledge," the powers of the mind being restored and invigorated; and "true Holiness," a qualification "without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14).

* * *

All Creation Under The Curse

When sin entered into the world it brought a curse upon the entire creation. The thorn and the thistle sprang up; the animal creation became vicious; man was compelled to eat his bread by the sweat of his face. "For we know the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain until now" (Rom. 8:22). The curse must be lifted, and the cause removed, before man can enjoy a state comparable with that which Adam enjoyed. Then shall come to pass that which is written by the prophet Isaiah, "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them."

* * * * *

05 -- WHERE IS HEAVEN?

What Others Have Said

"Somewhere in the depths of the universe there is a transfigured world, which is the abode of Christ. St. Augustine says, 'Do not doubt that Jesus Christ as Man, is not in a place from whence He shall come again. Do not forget, and retain faithfully what the Christian faith teaches us, that Christ is risen from the dead, that He ascended into heaven, and that He is seated at the right hand of the Father, from whence He shall come again. He shall come to judge the living and the dead. According to the testimony of two angels, He will come in the same manner as He was seen ascending into heaven; that is to say, in the same form, with the same body to which He has given immortality without in any way changing its nature.'

"Where are the souls that see and love God? Where are our beloved dead who entered into eternity as friends of God and heirs of heaven? Reason cannot answer these questions; but in revelation, in the message sent from God to man, we find an answer that is full of consolation and hope. Jesus said, 'I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also.' He said also, 'Where the body is there will be the vultures (the eagle saints) be gathered.' The redeemed are with Christ. But, one may urge, Christ is God and God is everywhere. True, Christ is God, but He is also Man. He who ascended into heaven is as truly Man as He is truly God. As Man He has a body. It has not lost its nature; it is not omnipresent; it is in a place above and beyond the earth where the souls of the blessed rejoice in His presence and see Him face to face." -- D. J. Cavanaugh.

"A few things seem to my mind at least to be well established. Heaven is a place; it is not a mere state or condition of blissful holiness. A distinctly bounded place of abode it must be, or else St. John's view of it from the isle of Patmos was an idle phantom. God's word speaks of it as a 'city' and as filled with 'many mansions.' The light of it proceeds from a central throne; for the Lamb in the midst of the throne is the light thereof. Its pellucid pavements [pellucid = transparent, clear -- Oxford Dict.] are like unto fine gold. The music of its praises fell upon the apostle's ear with such a sublime roar of melodies that, likening them to the Mediterranean's surf dashing upon the rocks of Patmos, he called them the 'sound of many waters.' Surrounding this vast scene of splendor he saw something which he describes as walls of precious stones, and these walls were pierced with gates of pearl." -- Theodore L. Cuyler.

"Heaven is not an earthly kingdom; for, the Lord says, 'My kingdom is not of this world.' It is not a physical kingdom; for, 'Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.' St. Paul says, 'The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.' Isaiah tells us, 'It is the habitation of God's holiness and glory: God's dwelling place.' "Chalmers.

"Job said, 'Is not God in the highest heaven?' And David writes, 'Heaven is high above the earth.' So, every evidence seems to be that heaven is above. Christ's statement to Mary confirms this, 'I ascend to My Father and your Father, and to my God and to your God.' And what does above mean? This evening it means upward; tomorrow morning it will mean upward; so that, as the earth turns around, up means constantly out from the earth -- everywhere! No exclusion; heaven is all round us, wherever we are Always heaven is up. Up from the earth's surface; up from hill and valley, plain, mountain, mine or dungeon; from ocean depths or coach of death, it forever expands as a bow of glory, making radiant the sky and filling the open soul with covenants of promise effectual.

"Inasmuch as by man's residence on earth his soul has developed its character, accumulated knowledge, established its individual life and become accustomed to think and act from its own impulses, intuitions and conclusions; impelled thereto by its own faculties and the spiritual influences it permits to effect it; and as this residence never becomes satisfactorily complete; so, it is folly to believe our souls are builded into personalities to expire as personalities uselessly immature; but rather, that they have been started in growth here for fuller development in heaven. Therefore, is it not logical to conclude that, continuously here and hereafter each human soul

expands into an 'I am' of eternal identity, distinguishable from all other souls in unavoidable presentation of appearance, as well as by defined characteristics and preceptable [sic -- perceptible? -- there is no such word as "preceptable" -- DVM] knowledge? Is it not logical to conclude that each human soul grows as a spiritual body, and is substantial, defined and enduring? Because it is spiritual, can it not after separation from its earthly body freely enter into that we call space, which is in fact the true spiritual universe?" -- Henry S. Belden.

We have quoted from these various writers in order that the reader may know what wise and devout men, who have given much thought to the subject, think about heaven. As expressed by these writers and by numerous passages of Scripture, heaven as a location is invariably up and away from the earth.

The word heaven, as we know, has several meanings, --

(1) The air surrounding the earth. Hence, we speak of the birds of heaven; the regions of the clouds. "Rain and snow come down from heaven."

(2) The firmament, or region of the planets and celestial bodies. "The heavens declare the glory of God."

(3) The abode of God. "The Lord's throne is in heaven." "Is not God in the heights of heaven?" St. Paul was caught up to the "third heaven."

We are nowhere in the Scriptures told of any particular locality of the universe as being heaven. It is pure fancy, or speculation, to locate heaven, as some have, in the Pleiades, the North Star, or on one of the planets. If heaven is up from the earth, in any direction, then heaven is all about us. The earth, being a heavenly body, would come under the definitions of heaven. Many of our songs carry this thought, such as,

"When I rise to worlds unknown
And behold Thee on Thy throne;
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."

"This robe of flesh I'll drop and rise
To seize the everlasting prize,
And shout while passing through the air,
Farewell, farewell sweet hour of prayer."

* * *

A New Heaven And A New Earth

We have noted that in the Scriptures heaven is invariably represented as above or away from the earth. Some claim that the earth will be the only heaven. They base their belief upon such Scriptures as, "We look for a new heaven and a new earth," "The meek shall inherit the earth,"

"For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." And that Jesus will come back to the earth and set up His millennial reign upon the earth.

It does not appear reasonable that God would create the earth, permit Satan to rule it for several thousand years, then destroy it. The earth has had its baptism with water, and we expect it to have its baptism of fire. Just when this will take place has not been revealed to us. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up (II Pet. 3:10).

* * *

The Earth As Heaven

It is not unreasonable to think that when the earth is purified by fire, and sin forever put out of it, that it will be a suitable place for God's resurrected children. If the planets that make up a great portion of "My Father's House" are the "Mansions" in that House, there is no reason the earth may not be one of them, since the earth is a planet. The earth is the Lord's, and we are sure He can renovate it, remove even the noxious weeds and pestilential germs that now molest us; put Satan out and annex it back to heaven. The earth was once "without form and void," the Lord made it habitable for the human race, and He can as easily make it habitable for heavenly citizens. Then will come to pass the prophecy of Isaiah: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose."

Sir Arthur Keith says, "That which at first seemed a curse has turned out to be a blessing. For if men believe, as I do, that this present earth is the only heaven, they will strive all the more to make heaven of it. To feel that we are mere birds of passage, only temporary probationers, is not conducive to the best conduct."

The idea has also been advanced that the earth is a kind of propagating ground, an incubator, where souls are born who will ultimately populate the regions of the universe. This, of course, is mere speculation -- or nonsense. It hardly appears probable that God would select such an insignificant planet as the earth for such a purpose; a planet so small that if other worlds are inhabited by intelligent beings, and they have telescopes with no greater power than those we have, they have never discovered our planet;

"The earth may be a tiny garden spot in the vast universe, where, among millions of other gardens, souls are grown for heavenly habitations. Does not this little earth roll around and speed away over its orbit in the midst of God's kingdom, always surrounded by heaven? Is it not only an earth because the God of heaven wills it to be, sustains it, and uses it for heavenly purposes? Is it not reasonable that God brings us into being that He may educate us for life in the unfathomable expanse of heaven." -- Henry S. Belden.

"The laws of matter, remember, do not exist for spiritual beings. For them there is no such thing as distance or nearness. They do not go from place to place by location. They do not travel at

all in our sense of the word. Within the sphere of their finite conditions they are instantaneously wherever they wish to be. Space and time no more impede them than they impede your thoughts, which reach any part of the globe in a moment. In short, the researches of scientific men have now proved that there are innumerable sights and sounds, color and voices, in this world which we inhabit, of which we are not cognizant merely because we have no organs fine enough to apprehend them. A distinguished professor of science says, 'When we reflect that there are waves of light and sound of which our dull senses take no cognizance; that there is a great difference even in human perceptivity, and that some men, more gifted than their fellows, can see color and hear sounds which are invisible and inaudible to the great bulk of mankind; you will appreciate how possible it is that there may be a world of spiritual existence around us, inhabiting this globe, enjoying the same nature; in fact, the wonder of the New Jerusalem may be in our midst, and the songs of the angelic host filling the air with their celestial harmonies, although unseen and unheard by us.

"Another distinguished man of science says, 'Myriads of organized beings may exist, imperceptible to our vision, even if we were among them.'

"Is not this an awful thought? We are never alone. The air around us is resonant with voices which we do not hear, tremulous with the vibrations of shapes moving to and fro, which we do not see. How cautious, how reverent, the thought should make us." -- Malcolm MacCall.

Another writer asks: "What is meant by the New Heavens and the New Earth referred to in the Scriptures? We have maintained that in some mysterious sense heaven is a place, the exact location of which has not been revealed to us. That the soul will remain in heaven forever, of course, is certain; but when the 'new heaven and new earth' appear, our souls will be clothed again with flesh, and we may infer that conditions will be changed to suit these new circumstances. The Patriarch Job, says, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth and I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see God, whom I myself shall see and my eyes shall behold and not another.'

"In spite of the difficulty connected with this passage from the Book of Job, Christians believe most firmly in the doctrine of the resurrection and they have other grounds for belief. 'The hour cometh,' says Jesus, 'wherein all that are in the grave shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and they that have done good shall come forth 'unto resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment.'

"When we think of heaven as the abode of the blessed, clothed again in the flesh, we have more reason to ask about its whereabouts, and there is nothing to prevent us from saying that it will be one, immense, wonderful universe of God! Heaven will not be an abstraction, nor a vaporous emotion, nor even a pure state of mind, but sensible to touch and feeling."

In view of many strong Scriptural statements, it does not seem reasonable to hold that the earth is the only heaven. For instance, Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world." It is not a physical kingdom for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." Paul says, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." Isaiah says, "'It is the habitation of God's holiness and glory; God's dwelling place.'" Paul says

again, "For we know if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Keeping in mind the distinction that we should make between disembodied spirits between death and the resurrection, and the resurrected bodies of God's children, the Scriptures quoted above are not contrary in their teaching to the idea that the earth may be a part of heaven. After the great conflagration the earth will remain. David said, "Thou hast established the earth, and it abideth." The New Earth will be the old earth purified, renovated, and more than re-Edenized. It will be spiritualized and more beautiful than ever. The new heavens will have no lightning bolts with thunders reverberating through the clouds, or cyclones and devastating storms to sweep across the land.

* * *

A Familiar Place

In heaven the universe, between the borders of our knowledge, may be as familiar to our living souls as the scenes of our childhood were on earth. Alive in the life of the Creative Master, we will tread the starless tracts of the myriads of stars, more fearlessly and joyously than we now walk the paths of the beautiful earthly scenes. "In His circuit of the heavens" we will visit all the travelers therein; view their wonders, understand God's purposes in them; know their people and read in their faces their histories. Eternal records will not be concealed from us, and our knowledge will expand as the days which are beginningless and endless.

* * *

My Father's House

To the thinking of most Bible students, "My Father's House" comprehends the entire universe, including, of course, the earth. We are now inhabitants of the earth, but may we not in the hereafter be inhabitants of the universe? Paul tells us that "our citizenship is in heaven." We are now exiles, our real home is not here. Abraham "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Abraham looked, but John saw such a city.

Between death and the resurrection, it is difficult to conceive whether our spiritual bodies will occupy a "place" or be in a "condition," or both. It is easy to conceive, however, that the resurrected body could occupy a place. What other interpretation can we put on the words of Jesus, "I go to prepare a place for you." The word "mansions" is translated as "abodes" by some scholars. Here we have another earth-word which to us signifies the highest, most elaborate, most beautiful dwelling place known to man. We are prone to picture heaven to ourselves in word-terms with which we are familiar. We are told to lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven, then we proceed to build our "mansions" out of the material we have sent ahead of us. Probably this thought has been prompted by the words of Jesus, when He said, 'Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when you fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.'

* * *

The New Jerusalem

John saw a city coming down from God out of heaven. He does not state that it ever reached the earth. Some have thought that the "coming down" was only apparent. The parachutist when falling from a height does not have a sensation of falling, but to him the earth appears to be coming up to meet him. Likewise, when coming into port on an ocean liner, the city appears to be coming to meet the ship. Of course, we do not know that this was the case of the New Jerusalem which John saw coming down. We would rather accept the plain statement of St. John than attempt another explanation that would be far more difficult.

In his comments on Revelation, Dr. Seiss does not think the city ever reached the earth . That it is suspended somewhere in the heavens, and is probably the capital of the universe. The redeemed saints and angels may have free access thereto, but not necessarily making it their permanent abiding place.

A material city that is 1,500 miles long, 1,500 miles wide, and 1,500 miles high, to our thinking, would be ill adapted to inhabitants such as we know. We must confess at once that we meet many obstacles, humanly speaking, in our effort to picture a heaven such as this would be. Many have figured out the enormous capacity of a city of that size, making ample room for streets, throne space, etc.; and by making commodious rooms for each individual, there would be space to accommodate millions. Houses on earth are built for protection, comfort and convenience. To have a house constructed somewhat on the order of a huge dove cote, where we must fly to our particular rooms (unless we were fortunate enough to get rooms on the ground floor) does not fit into our thinking. We may more easily conceive of streets of gold, rivers of pure water, even walls of jasper and gates of pearl. We know our God is able to do great things, and this may be one of the things that "the heart of man has not conceived." Probably if gold in this world was as plentiful as gravel, and gravel as scarce as gold, we would make ornaments of gravel and pave the streets with gold. Faith here must bridge the chasm between our little knowledge and what the reality will be, resting in the assurance that our "God doeth all things well."

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06 -- VASTNESS OF THE UNIVERSE

Nothing so bows our hearts with humility and thankfulness as to consider the infinity of God and the vastness of the universe. No wonder the Psalmist cried out, "When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, what is man that thou art mindful of him!"

We would --

"Fall at His feet,
The story repeat,
And the Lover of sinners adore."

In considering this subject we should begin with a prayer, and we shall make use of the words of another:

"Thou who hast showered that which we call space, which is without length, breadth, height or depth, with thy sparkling stars and celestial bounties from the limitless storehouse of thine almighty conceptions; who doth drive the celestial monsters of the skies in their orbits and made certain by thine own thought -- their moving laws. Thou who dost people them by thy living breath, with thine own living children, descendants of thy love, born of thy desire to share thine Omnipotent fullness; thou, who by thy Word dost fill the interstarry space with the spiritual imagery of thine own pleasure, working therein thine own delight; thou who dost build thy New Jerusalem and all the glories of heaven out of thine unspeakable ability and because of thine infinite love; thou who art our Father and dost honor us by offering us life from thy life, the life of Jesus, before whom all evils flee away; unto whom the past, the present and future are one; help us to think of, talk of, enter into and widen thy kingdom on earth, before we claim entrance into thy kingdom of heaven. In thine Omnipotent strength enable us to reach the borders of thy heaven on earth, even here, we may commence to fathom the unsearchable riches of thy grace which are forever in thy presence; so that they may be our joy, not only here, but when time shall have been merged into eternity!

"Our souls adore thee! And we pray for that light, purity and love, the life moved toward holiness by grace Divine, which alone will make us acceptable in the Beloved and partakers of His eternal inheritance! Grant that we may hearken to the Holy Spirit in life; clothe us with mercy, fill us with the peace of heavenly wisdom; give us thoughts through the new birth by faith in Jesus Christ, worthy of our Redeemer from earth and death; that we may be with Him, to live, to learn, and work, and praise, and enjoy heaven forever! " -- Henry S. Belden.

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Other Worlds Than Ours

Jesus said, "Other sheep have I that are not of this fold, them I must bring." Commentators are not agreed on the exact meaning of these words. Some think that He meant that there were other planets, inhabited by intelligent beings, and that they were entitled to hear the story of redemption. Others, of course, interpret this as referring to the Gentiles, and some to the "spirits in prison" (I Pet. 3:19). In view of the wide divergence of wiser minds than our own, we cannot be dogmatic, but simply admit that we do not know.

When we think of the universe, populated as it is with millions of worlds, we are led to wonder for what purpose God created them. If the millions of blazing suns were placed in the universe for no other purpose than for us to see them twinkle, it would seem a waste of material and a useless expenditure of energy. Let us read what another has said: "Shall our world be the limit of the wondrous story of Redemption? Though ever and deeply interesting as the scene of redemption, our earth in other respects holds a very insignificant place in creation. In a space of the sky no larger than a tenth part of the moon's disc, the telescope discovers thousands of stars, each a sun, attended probably by a group of planets like our own; their number indeed is such that

many parts of the heavens appear as if they were sprinkled with gold dust; and probably there are as many suns and worlds in the universe as there are leaves in the forest, or rather, sands on the ocean shore.

"Boldly venturing out into the regions of speculation, some have thought that if sin defiles any of these worlds, its inhabitants may share in the benefits of the atonement of which Christ offered in ours; and that being further removed than we from the scene of Calvary, and differing more from us than we from the Jews of whom the Messiah came, may, as well as we, find a Savior by faith in Jesus; and that for this end the work of redemption has perhaps been revealed to such as, removed from our earth many millions of miles, never even saw the planet that was its theater and scene.

There may be nothing to this. I dare not say it is impossible; but these speculations touch the deep things of God, and we would not attempt to be wise above that which is written. Still, Scripture affords ground for believing, for hoping, at least, that the story of redemption 'has been told in other worlds than ours, and that the love of God in Christ -- that fairest, fullest manifestation of our Father's heart-links parts of creation together, and links all more closely to the throne of God . . . I believe that He who delights to bless all His unfallen creatures would not withhold from the inhabitants of other spheres the happiness of knowing Him in His most adorable, gracious, and glorious character; and I can fancy them eagerly searching their skies for a sight of our world, -- the scene of that story which has conveyed to them the fullest knowledge of Him they love, the deepest sense of His ineffable holiness and unspeakable mercy. Not from pole to pole, but from planet to planet, and from star to star, the love of Christ deserves to be proclaimed; and it is a thought as grand as it is probable, that the story of Calvary, not yet translated into all the tongues of earth, is told in ten times ten thousand tongues in other worlds, and that the Name which is above every name -- the blessed Name which dwells in the life of a believer's heart and trembles in death on his lips -- is known in spheres which man's foot has never trod and his eye never saw. Such honors crown the Head which man once crowned with thorns; and therefore did David, with an eye of a seer and the fire of a poet, while calling for praise from kings of the earth and all people, princes and judges, young men and children, rise to loftier flights, exclaiming: "Praise Him in the heights, all ye angels; praise Him all His hosts. Praise sun and moon; praise Him all ye stars of light! " -- Thomas Guthrie.

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Facts About The Stars

The stars which can be seen without the aid of a telescope are divided into six groups. The twenty brightest stars constitute the first group and are first magnitude stars. About 5,000 stars, in all the sky, are visible without the aid of a telescope. Less than half this number can be seen at any one time. The number of stars within the reach of our telescope runs into millions. Many stars are recorded on photographic plates. The brightest star in all the sky is called Sirius. This the famous dog star, rising and setting with the sun during dog days. It is receding from the earth at the rate of twenty miles a second. Seventeen years are required for its light to reach the earth. It is 1,200 times as large as the sun. Our sun is a medium sized star, 1,000,000 times the size of the earth. Light from the sun, traveling at the rate of 186,300 miles a second, reaches us in a little more than

eight minutes. The light from the next nearest star, Alpha Centauri, requires three and one-half years. It would take more than a lifetime to go from the earth to our sun on an express train running day and night. If this distance be represented by one inch, 158 miles would represent the distance to Vega -- the arc light of the sky. Our sun is taking us with it through space, nearly toward Vega, at the rate of twenty miles a second, or 630,000,000 miles a year. The North Star seems to remain nearly fixed while the other stars appear to revolve about it in great circles. This star gives us our directions at night and also our latitude. When we are on the equator, this star is on the horizon. When we are at the North Pole, this star is overhead and in any direction we start would be South. East and West disappear when we stand at either pole of the earth. The light from the Polar Star requires fifty years to reach us and we see that star tonight as it was fifty years ago when the light we now receive left it. Castor and Pollux have been called twin stars for over 4,000 years, although in all that time they have been separating at the rate of 5,000,000 miles a day. On account of their enormous distance from the earth, they appear to be twin stars, and will so continue for thousands of years to come.

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Things That Frighten Us

A writer states that the astronomers once saw things that frightened us; now they see things that frighten them. The old astronomer, with his crude instruments, said that we could never know the diameter of stars; for, no instrument then known could disclose a disc, and the most powerful telescope only made a star shoot more vivid flashes of light. Instruments have now been developed which measure the diameter of stars with approximate accuracy. One of the first stars thus measured, this astronomer tells us, was Antares, and its diameter turned out to be four hundred million miles. Our earth is nearly one hundred million miles from the sun, so that if our sun were placed in the center of Antares, the earth in its journey around the sun, would be one hundred million miles within the star, or half way between its circumference and its center. Our sun is a very small star. There are others that in size and mass and brightness dwarf it into relative insignificance.

If in the life to come we are privileged to be citizens of the universe, let us consider a little further this realm the writer tells us about, using his words:

"It has long been known that the nearest star to our solar system that has yet been discovered is about four light-years distant. A light-year is the yardstick, or mile, astronomers use in measuring celestial spaces; this being the distance a ray of light, moving at the rate of 186,300 miles a second travels in a year. (It was once thought that light was instantaneous, and an old-time investigator 'proved' it. One night he took his assistant, each supplied with a lantern; one went to the top of one hill, and the other went to the top of another hill a mile or so away, in sight of the light of each other's lantern. "Now," instructed the old philosopher, "I will shut off the light of my lantern and as soon as you see my light go out, you shut off your light." This they did, testing it time and again, but it appeared to them that both lights went out at the same time, hence they boldly announced that light travels instantaneously! This crude experiment seemed to settle the matter, and was accepted for a hundred years or more.)

"An enormous chasm separates the earth and the solar system from the nearest star. But stars have now been discovered that are a million and even hundreds of millions of light-years distant. The frontier of the universe has not been reached, and the question is whether it has any bounds.

"Greater wonders are yet to be discovered. There are scattered all over the heavens faint patches of light that are either vast tracts of luminous gas or star-dust, or are huge clusters and masses of stars. The gaseous nebulae appear to be remnants left over from marking solar systems, or else are material out of which such systems are being made. Most of the gaseous nebulae belong to our own galaxy, or stellar system, but the nebulae which are spiral in shape are at enormous distances compared with the stars in our galaxy, and are viewed as separate galaxies like our own, or "inland universe . . . Our Milky Way, which is composed of billions of stars and runs around our sky as a faint band of light; is the galaxy to which our sun belongs, and as it goes around our heavens our sun is somewhere near the center of it. This galaxy is variously estimated as to its size, one estimate being that it is three hundred thousand light-years in diameter and about ten thousand light-years thick, it being disc-shaped like a watch. These spiral nebulae are galaxies similar to our own, therefore, composed of millions and millions of stars. The vast arms that wind out from their centers show that they are unitary systems with some common origin or development, some of them, like the Magellanic Clouds, appearing to have shrunk into scattered remnants. It is these giant spirals, the most mysterious and terrifying objects in the heavens, that are moving relatively toward us at twelve hundred miles a second, and are a million light-years and infinitely beyond.

"A new order of speed has also been discovered. Our sun, attended with its family of planets, is moving through space at something like twenty miles a second; but this is a moderate rate of celestial traveling and is as the speed of an ox-cart compared with a rifle ball. Stars have now been discovered that are moving at the rate of twelve hundred miles a second; every tick of the clock they are twelve hundred miles farther away, and at that rate they would flash from New York to San Francisco in less than three seconds. Imagination is crushed and ceases to form any conception of such magnitudes and distances and speeds, and we use these bewildering figures without any corresponding ideas.

"We are thus ushered into a universe of a new order of magnitudes outrunning all our powers of conception, consisting of countless star-clusters and vast constellations and nebulae, a boundless snow-storm of suns and Systems, huge solar monsters moving at frightful speeds, and infinite complexity of fiery wheels within wheels and blazing galaxies beyond galaxies, leaving us doubting our own senses and wondering if things are as we see them to be." -- James H. Snowden.

When we consider that outside our own solar system, nothing but stars, blazing suns, can be seen from the earth, even with the strongest telescopes man has invented; and presuming that each star has its own system of planets and moons, such as we find in our own solar system, we get some small idea of the teeming millions of worlds that make up "Our Father's House."

* * *

Activity In The Universe

We are in a universe of tremendous activity. Little as we realize it, our earth is wheeling around the sun at a rate of approximately sixteen miles a second; and it makes its yearly trip exactly on time. Some scientists claim that the tides have a tendency to slow the daily revolution of the earth, thus increasing the length of our days; but if so, the rate is so small that it little concerns us.

Notwithstanding the vast speed at which some of the suns and systems are traveling through the universe, their relative positions, to us, have not changed. The Pleades, the North Star, the Big Dipper and other stars, on account of the enormous distance they are removed from us, appear to be exactly in the same position they were when Adam first gazed on the fiery firmament. Because the ancients could not detect any change in the position of 'these suns they called them "fixed stars," thus distinguishing them from the planets, "wanderers," which they observed were constantly changing positions.

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Will The Universe Run Down?

Astronomers tell us that the sun is giving off millions of tons of energy every second, and the same is true of every other star in the universe. Many of the heathen and pagan worshippers made the sun their god. This is a natural result when we consider that all the natural forces about us are derived from the energy of the sun. The vast deposits of coal and oil stored in the earth are just so much condensed sunlight. The power of the sun drives the winds and the waves. Unless this immense energy that is being thrown off by the sun is replenished, it must at some time become exhausted. There is a well-known law of physics that says nothing is really destroyed, or annihilated. A thing may be consumed by fire, but if we could gather the ashes and the gasses that were given off and weigh them, we would find the exact weight of the material before fire was set to it. The moon has every evidence that once there were volcanoes that belched from its surface, leaving vast craters. Now not a trace of moisture or of atmosphere can be found on its dreary surface. If the moon has "run down," and the sun is giving off its energy at an enormous rate, may not the sun, too, become a dead world in the ages to come? This has led one to say, "We know this earth cannot be an eternal habitation for it is perishable; that all the starry hosts of heaven are also perishable; for they all bear upon their faces evidence of mutability and therefore of destruction; hence they never could be intended for places of dwelling for eternal lives."

There are stars that once blazed brilliantly for a time, then gradually their light diminished until they faded completely away, and can no longer be found on the maps astronomers have made of the heavens. What became of them? They evidently burned out, and their fires having nothing more to feed upon have gone out.

These mysteries of the skies will cause us to ask strange questions; our recourse is only to fall back upon God who knows how to run the universe, and we need not give ourselves any concern about it.

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07 -- THE RESURRECTION

The resurrection of the dead is the main pillar of the Christian religion, remove this and the entire structure falls. The resurrection of Christ is the assurance and type of ours. St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen . . . And if Christ be not risen your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins . . . If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most miserable." To deny the resurrection one might as well adopt the philosophy, "eat and be merry for tomorrow we die," and that is the last of you. The resurrection of the saints is called the manifestation of the sons of God, the adoption, the redemption of our bodies. It is the grand jubilee of the church, and even of the creation. To those who have come into the real knowledge and service of Jesus, nothing less than the resurrection of their bodies, with companionship with Jesus, will make complete happiness; and nothing more is needed. The greatest happiness on earth is not so much a matter of where we are, but with whom we are. The most beautiful scenes, the most luxurious surroundings, count for nothing compared with true harmony in the human beings around us; so it must be in the future state. Faith puts the brightness of an immortal hope amid our graveyard griefs; writes on every tombstone, "I am the resurrection and the life" calls aloud to every mourner, "Thy dead shall live!"

* * *

Theories Of The Resurrection

The fact of the resurrection is generally believed by all nations and races. However, there are differences of opinion as to the manner of the resurrection. There are those who hold to the "Germ Theory" of the resurrection; that is, that the actual particles of the body which are placed in the grave are not raised, but a new body, not necessarily composed of the identical particles that composed the body at the time of death will be raised. Then, there are those who believe the identical particles of the body that were placed in the grave will come forth at the resurrection.

The Germ Theory has some very plausible arguments in its favor. Without subscribing to this theory, the arguments in its favor are presented, as follows:

* * *

The Germ Theory

The Germ Theory of the resurrection is largely based upon the illustration given by St. Paul; I Cor. 15, in regard to the grain of wheat that is sown in the soil. As we have no doubt observed, there is embedded in each grain of wheat or corn a life principle. This is a minute particle of the grain. When the grain is planted in the soil and comes in contact with moisture and has the warmth of sunshine, this life principle "sprouts." The grain itself is made up largely of starch which, as the grain decays, furnishes the substance upon which the tender plant is at first nourished; but soon roots are sent down and the plant takes nourishment from the soil. The blade then springs up, and the plant of whatever kind it may be, reproduces itself; in the case of wheat,

often many times the original grain that was planted. St. Paul says, "God gives it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed his own body."

This illustration is continued by saying of the body, "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." The particular statements about which there is much mystery is this, "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die; and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, . . . But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed his own body."

To the thinking of many, it does not seem necessary that all the particles actually composing the body at death should be reassembled in a body that shall rise at the last day. This would require a special and miraculous Divine interposition in some cases, however this would not exceed the power of God.

We are told that our bodies are constantly changing. With every breath particles are cast off. The food we eat is transformed by the digestive organs into flesh, bone, blood and nerves. It is said that our bodies are completely changed in the course of seven years. A man, therefore, who had lived for seventy years would have had ten different bodies; yet the same man occupied each body. While we would not limit the power of God, nevertheless we are confronted with many conditions that make it seem highly improbable that the identical particles of our bodies will be raised. For instance, many bodies have been cremated, and the ashes of some have been strewn upon the waters of the sea. Some have lost limbs, some have been eaten by cannibals, and the particles of their bodies transformed into the very bodies of others. Again, we may be plowing the soil that once was the graveyard's of the savages that inhabited this country long before Columbus discovered it. We may be reaping year after year the grain and fruit that form our foods from the very soil that was enriched by their decaying bodies. Who would claim these particles in the resurrection, for probably two or more persons died with the same identical particles in their bodies?

Some have died with poor, emaciated, wasted bodies, wasted and corrupted by some loathsome and disfiguring disease; it surely would not be that spoiled body with which the person would rise, and could hardly be one from the identical particles of which it was composed. We have always been taught, and firmly believe, that the bodies of the glorified saints shall not have disfiguring and inglorious marks like these, and that limbs or members which have been lost shall be restored in heaven. The teaching of Jesus is in accord With this. He could hardly have meant in saying, as we find recorded in Matthew 5:29, 30, that we should actually enter "into (eternal) life maimed, or lame." But rather that we should lose our hands or feet in this life than to forfeit the life to come. Perfect happiness would be inconsistent with these blemishes and inconveniences. These defects in the resurrection, must be made up from material not belonging to the body at the time of death; and there appears to be no reason why this material should at any time have belonged to that body, and have been separated from it in the constant changes which our bodies undergo in this life. If we take the position that our resurrected bodies have no connection with material, being spiritual bodies, then we have difficulties and scriptural statements to explain that are worse confusing.

One writer quotes this from Ezekiel and makes the following comment: "Ezekiel in a vision was set down in a valley full of dry bones. He heard a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bones; the sinew and the flesh came upon them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet." "This might be a vision," says this writer, "but all this and much more, should in time come to pass; that our bones after they are crumbled into dust should really become living men; that all the little parts whereof our bodies were made should immediately, at a general summons, meet again, and every one challenge and possess its own place, till at last the whole be perfectly rebuilt -- that this, I say, should be done is so incredible a thing that we cannot so much as have any notion of it."

The above is the substance of the teaching in regard to the Germ Theory of the resurrection. Some very serious objections to this are raised, as we shall note in the following.

* * *

The Identical Body To Be Raised

From the illustration of Paul, which we quoted above, it appears that if the resurrection of the body means anything, it must mean that something from the old body comes up and takes a fresh form. What else is meant by such expressions as this: "All that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and come forth?" It is true, the planted grain of corn has a life principle; the plant, though very dissimilar to the bare grain, has a vital connection with it. It grows out of it, and is of the same order; there is an unbroken continuity. But the connection between the buried body and the raised body is not so easy to explain as that between the buried seed and the up-growing plant, or between the chrysalis and the moth. In neither of these cases is life really extinct; death is only apparent. There is an unbroken continuity traceable from the smallest seed to the mightiest tree, from the embryo in the shell to the monarch of the air. But no continuity is traceable between the raised and the buried man; there seems an awful break. This does not mean that it does not exist. Whatever theories we may have, the Scriptural fact still remains that the new body will have an organic connection with the old. If this is not true, then the resurrection of the body is a myth. Daniel said, "Those that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

* * *

Not Impossible With God

God created man originally out of the dust of the earth. It should not be thought an impossible thing with God, after these bodies have gone back to dust again, to reassemble them. The body we now have is composed of particles that have been gathered from all quarters of the earth. If we ate an orange for breakfast that came from Florida, then there is stored in our body particles of Florida. The bread we ate probably came from the Dakotas, Kansas, or Minnesota; we put some salt in our food that may have come from Michigan, probably some pepper, or other seasoning, that came from India or the isles of the Sea, some sugar that came from Cuba. All these particles we have taken into our bodies have been assimilated and are now a part of us. God

brought these particles together to form our present bodies, and, if necessary, He can do the same in the resurrection.

If the Germ Theory is true, there is no resurrection of the body on this hypothesis, because the germ, or stamina, can in no good sense be called a body. There is on this theory no resurrection at all. If the preserved part of the germ, and the analogy of germination be carried out, then we have no longer a resurrection from death, but a vegetation from a suspended principle of secret life. If the stamina is contended for, then the body, into which the soul enters at the resurrection, with the exception of this minute germ, is provided for it by the addition and aggregation of new matter, and we have a creation, not a resurrection.

"The Bible statement is direct, unmistakable in its meaning that these same bodies which have been the vehicle as well as the abode of the soul, its partner as well as its servant, shall be raised. The man is as much body as soul, and the Bible doctrine holds to the resurrection of the body -- this body -- its identity well maintained, and its dust rekindled to life and beauty. This same body that has shared so fully in the trials and sorrows of this earthly life, shall share in all the ultimate triumphs or sorrows of the life to come. . . . The Bible declares that our bodies are part of us, that they are included in the recovering scheme of grace, that they are partners with the spirit in its earthly course of faith or disobedience, and that they are to share in the honors or shame of the eternal state.

"It is obvious that this present body, not in substance but in qualities and capacity, will not be suited to the changed and higher conditions and employments of the heavenly life. It may not be so obvious, but must be equally true that the revelation on this point, if made to us in detail, could not be understood, and so we have the facts stated in an explicit and general way, that these bodies are to be changed. The great outlines only are given. It is said with force that these bodies in their present qualities will be entirely unsuited to the changed relations; that flesh and blood cannot inherit that happy state nor meet its high demands" -- E. M. Bounds.

"All the children of God shall have glorious bodies, yet the glory of them all shall not be equal. "As one star differeth from another star in glory, so also in the resurrection of the dead." They shall all shine as stars, but those who, by constant diligence in well-doing, have attained to a higher measure of purity than others shall shine more brightly than others. They shall appear as more glorious stars. It is certain that the most heavenly bodies will be given to the most heavenly souls; so that this is no little encouragement to us to make the greatest progress we possibly can in the knowledge of the love of God, since the more we are weaned from the things of the earth now the more glorious will our bodies be at the resurrection." -- John Wesley.

* * *

The Intermediate State

Does the soul go directly to heaven at death? This question has been asked thousands of times. There are sects that teach that the soul sleeps from the time of death until the resurrection. This teaching is not generally accepted. There are a number of Scriptures that point otherwise. Jesus' words to the dying thief, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise," seem to indicate that

both would be consciously together after death in a place called paradise, which evidently was not a dormitory! "Then (at death) shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the Spirit of God who gave it." St. Paul had a desire "to be with Jesus which was far better." And again he said, "Rather willing to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." The great company of Old Testament worthies, listed in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, seem to have been very much alive. The writer says, "Seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses." A witness certainly must be one who is wide awake.

If you ask what kind of bodies do we have immediately after death, we answer, no bodies at all, but disembodied spirits. We have bodies here until death; and we will have bodies in heaven after the resurrection. But in the interim, between death and the resurrection, the saints are without bodies of any kind. In Revelation John tells us, "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held." John saw the souls but not the bodies of the martyrs. In Hebrews we are told, "But ye are come to Mount Zion (heaven) unto the city of the living God, and to an innumerable company of angels . . . and to the spirits of just men made perfect." Of the angels it is said, "They are ministering spirits." That is, we have spirits like the angels.

Then there is the Catholic idea of Purgatory. No doubt they realize, as do many other churches, that many of their members are not fit for admission into heaven. In order to get them in, something must be done to purify their souls. The fires of purgatory are supposed to do this. The trouble with this teaching is that no one has ever returned to tell us whether there really is such a place, and, if so, whether it will accomplish the work it is supposed to do. Protestants can find no Scriptural basis for such teaching; and, if after death one should not find such a place, it would be too late to make amends. If one will not accept the blood of Jesus, which cleanses from all sin, here and now, what more could be done in another world? We should "make our calling and election sure" then purgatory or no purgatory, we will be on the winning side.

* * *

We Shall Be Changed

"Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trump shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall all be changed." (I Cor. 15:51, 52).

Just as the body which was given to us when we came into this world is adapted to the realm in which we are to spend our earthly life, so in the resurrection we will be given bodies that will be adapted to that realm where "flesh and blood cannot inherit." We must be "changed." This change involves many things that are difficult for us to conceive. It has not been fully revealed to us just what these changes will be, but we can easily conjecture what some of them will be, although our conclusions may be far short of the reality.

* * *

A Glorious Body

These bodies are dim and dishonored things, "vile bodies" of humiliation, shame and suffering. The change which they will undergo will make them glorious. The curtain was pulled aside on the Mount of Transfiguration, and the chosen disciples caught a view of the heavenly glory of Jesus. We are to be "like Him." Doubtless these bodies will be luminous with immortal life, radiant with its deathless charms.

Do we overstate the change. Raised in glory, Glory, magnificence, excellence, preeminence, dignity, grace, splendor, brightness -- these all? Christ said of them: "They shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." The prophet said, "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever."

* * *

A Powerful Body

"It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power." Our bodies in their present form are feeble. We know what it is to become tired and weary in our bodies and minds. The exercise of the muscles, the surging of the blood through arteries and veins, the tension of the fibers of our bodies become distraught by our exertion during the day and these cry out for surcease. We must lay our bodies down to rest. By a kind arrangement, we are permitted to become unconscious in sleep, thus allowing the mind to rest as well as the body. We lay aside the work, the worry, the problems of the day and relax. Unless we are able to do this, we may find our minds and bodies as weary in the morning as they were when we went to bed. If we could eliminate the friction, the worry, our human frames would perform more smoothly. It is not the running that wears out machinery, it is the friction. If we could reduce the friction to zero, then the machine would run forever. We endeavor to do this by using lubricants. The oil reduces the friction, the heat, the wear. Our bodies are machines that need to be properly lubricated. Worry kills more people than work. The oil of the Holy Spirit coming into one's life takes out the friction, reduces the anxiety, and helps these mortal frames to function more perfectly.

Disease or accident may dash our greatest vigor in a moment. The body is the instrument of the mind. We are commanded, "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin;" but a weakened body often reduces the power of the will and we find ourselves yielding to the temptations of Satan.

"Our bodies shall be raised in power." This expresses the sprightliness of our heavenly bodies, the nimbleness of their motion, by which they shall be obedient and able instruments of the soul. In this state our bodies are no better than clogs and fetters, which confine and restrain the freedom of the soul. The corruptible body presses down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weighs down the mind. Our dull, sluggish, inactive bodies are often unable, or backward, to obey the commands of the soul. But in the other life, as well as in this life, "they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up on wings as angels; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and faint not." The speed of their motion shall be like that of devouring fire in

stubble, and the height of it above the towering of an eagle; for they shall meet the Lord in the air, when He comes to claim His Bride, and mount up with Him into the highest heaven.

"The resurrection change will be into power. Energy will be one of its predominant features then, as weakness is now. Energy, deathless energy; energy unimpaired by labor, by clime, or by sickness, or death; energy without restraint or diminution; energy tireless in its pursuits. Exhaustless in its flow of life and spirits, it will need no rest for repair, no sleep to refresh, no recreation to recover waste; it will feel no faintness nor fatigue by the strongest pressure, severest tension, and most engaging employments. They will serve God day and night, as the outflow of a vigor which is sustained without pain or weariness through all the midday hours of the nightless land.

"Weariness, weakness, waste are here. Our heavenly bodies will be strength unabated, vigor unworn, life unweakened; no age to its youth, no sickness to its health, no fatigue to its toil, no night to its day. Energy unabated, power unlimited, strength unimpaired, vigor unweakened -- these will characterize our heavenly bodies." -- E. M. Bounds.

* * *

A Spiritual Body

"It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." This, to us, is most difficult to conceive. We think of the spiritual as that which is wholly separate from the material. Indeed, when Jesus appeared to His disciples, the doors being shut, they were frightened, and "supposed they had seen a spirit." Jesus calmed their fears, and bade them behold His hands and His feet, to handle Him; "for," said He, "a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." But may not the material be spiritualized? The angels are ministering spirits, yet they have the power to take the bodily form. Three angels came to the tent of Abraham and he entertained them, they ate of the food he prepared for them. It does not seem unreasonable that God will give His saints spiritualized material bodies. After the resurrection of Jesus, it appears, He had a body that was different from the body He had previous to that. It was not subject to the limitations of material substances. He did not need to have doors opened for Him to enter; yet, as we have just noted, it was a body that could be handled, a body that could partake of food. "They gave Him a piece of broiled fish, and an honeycomb, and He took it and did eat."

Whatever our bodies may be, they will be lifted above the passions and appetites of our present bodies, and fitted for the uses and employments of the heavenly state. The earth-born and earth-habituated bodies translated to heaven without change would be unfit for the engagements of that world, bewildered by its brightness, and appalled by its sleepless labors. Smitten and overpowered by its ecstatic visions, we could not bear the strain of that life; we could not engage in its worship nor meet the duties of one hour of heavenly demands. Oh, we must be changed, wondrously changed! When Daniel, one of the holiest men that ever lived, heard the message of the angel sent to him, he became dumb, "for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither was there breath left in me." St. John on the Isle of Patmos saw an angel in such bright array that he thought him to be his Lord and fell down to worship him, but was not permitted to do so. How

could we stand in the presence of such appalling splendor, without having our bodies marvelously changed!

* * *

We Shall Be Like Him

The Apostle tells us that "God giveth (the soul) a body as it hath pleased Him." God clothes life. In the universe there is undoubtedly life unclothed with matter. We believe this is true with the angels, although they are capable of taking on bodily forms, as noted above. This is true of God. "No one has seen God at any time." There may be around us innumerable oceans of life, but we perceive only the embodied. No science has yet told us what life is. In fact, we never see the individual, we see only the house in which he lives. God gave us bodies adapted to earth conditions. Animals, birds, fishes have bodies adapted to the realm in which they are to spend their lives. Thus, we see God clothes life according to His pleasure.

"Our resurrection bodies will be just as real and substantial as they are today -- if not more so; and while not spirit, they will be spiritual and greatly superior to our natural bodies. Jesus in His resurrection body was not a spirit -- but spiritual. In that body He ascended into heaven; in that body He intercedes for His people at the right hand of God today; and in that body He will return to the earth again. 'And when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.' When we get to heaven, have our new bodies, it is not unlikely that we shall instantly recognize everybody. Children of the same Father; redeemed by the same blood quickened by the same Spirit; and inhabitants of the same city and country, it is reasonably certain that we shall know each other." -- The Heaven of the Bible.

To be "like Him" implies more than mere resemblance. It is not a likeness of features; such as, "The boy is like his father." It includes that mysterious power of body which Jesus had. His disciples at times failed to recognize Him. After the resurrection He remained on the earth forty days before His ascension. His appearance and disappearance was mysterious. We do not read that at any time he made His abode with Martha, Mary and Lazarus, or with any of His disciples. His body was not subject to cold. Our aviators are able to reach a few thousand feet up in the air only by providing themselves with oxygen to breathe and having artificial means of warming their bodies. The intense cold at no great height would ordinarily freeze one in a few minutes. Marvelous body that our Lord must have had!

Is it any stretch of the imagination that we also shall have bodies that are not subject to the limitations of material substances and of atmospheric conditions? Then having spiritualized bodies, no heat will "light upon us" to burn and distress, neither cold to benumb or chill us. There will be open to our comprehension and enjoyment all the mechanisms of origin and growth, from the foundational tracery of most delicate spiritual conceptions to their completion. From the gathering of impulsive laws to the movement of vast comets. From the dismemberment of a sunbeam to the rushing into shape of worlds. No doubt the mystery of the atom, its subdivisions and powers will then be common knowledge. In heaven our sight will not be limited to surfaces, but with X-ray eyes we will be able to behold the workings of many things in nature that now seem so baffling and mysterious.

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08 -- POSSIBILITIES IN HEAVEN

The First Sinner

Sin did not make its first appearance in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were not the original sinners. Sin once broke out in heaven, probably millions of years before the appearance of man upon the earth. "There was war in heaven," we are told, "Michael fought" -- and won -- in the conflict. Lucifer, the Light Bearer, one of the brightest angels in heaven, who became Satan, organized a revolt, and his power and influence was so great that he induced a third part of the angels to join him. He and his rebellious company were cast out of heaven. Peter tells us, "God spared not the angel that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment."

May not sin break out again in heaven? -- some one may ask. For several reasons we would answer, No. First, the holy angels who remained true to the government of heaven and witnessed what happened to their fellows, could never be induced to revolt. They know that God is true to His word, and that He will maintain His government, although it cost Him the fairest angels around the throne. Second, the redeemed of earth who have seen and known so much of sin, that once they escape its bondage, would flee forever from any temptation to again enter its dark domain. We will know and appreciate then as we never can in this world, the great price that was paid for our redemption. Satan will be cast into the bottomless pit and will not be there with his temptations. There we will be forever removed from the temptation to sin. Happy anticipation, happy realm! The power of love, reinforced a thousand times, will draw us closer and closer to the One who has redeemed us from the thralldom of sin and made us to sit together with Him in the heavenly places.

* * *

Will Heaven Become Monotonous?

Wearisome sameness is one of the bugbears of this life. We must, if possible, have change of employment, place, scenes, speed else life becomes a bore. The housewife would gladly escape the daily grind of washing the same dishes, making the same beds, sweeping the same floors, cooking similar meals day after day, looking at the same pictures on the walls; and with each rising of the sun to know this work must be repeated with no change of scene. Is it any wonder that often the nerves snap, the health gives way? Even the thought that we must go to bed each night and get up each morning, put off and on our clothes, wash our face, comb our hair -- then repeat -- is distracting! No wonder there comes an urge to move somewhere about every six months, to change our employment, to take a vacation. Even should we make a change, no doubt, we would find life made up with much the same round of duties and perplexities; then we would long for the old scenes and wonder why we ever made a change!

The clouds that overspread the sky often depress us; but suppose the sun shone all the time, the earth would be scorched by heat, then we would pray for the shower -- only to grumble at the mud! Or, suppose we were all rich, all millionaires; then we could find no one who would mow our lawn, or wash and iron the linen. We often fail to appreciate the merciful provisions God has made for us.

* * *

A Restless World

In the restlessness and resistfulness of personal being, we might think a soul would grow weary of eternally serving and praising God, of being forever in heaven; but who, even on earth, tires of Singing the "Old, Old Story?" Of meditating on the love of God in Christ Jesus? Of contemplating the awful and glorious majesty of God? Of serving the precious Saviour?

We have learned in this life that we become satiated, fed-up, on the things this world produces. We may eat until food becomes nauseating, we may behold the most wonderful scenes of earth until we tire, sit down and quit looking. Many visitors from all parts of the world come to the Capital of the Nation year after year to look upon the interesting buildings, monuments, treasures of art found in the galleries and the interesting things stored in the museums. But many who have lived in the city for a number of years never go sightseeing any more. These things, having been seen once, have now become common-place to them. It is not so with things of faith. We love to listen to messages from God's Word, even day after day, week after week, and keep it up for a lifetime. On Sunday morning we may have rejoiced as we listened to a sermon exalting Christ and His salvation; but we are back again at the evening service with our ears -- probably our mouths -- open for another message of Divine truth. The things of faith grow upon us, the things of sight become dim.

How will it be in heaven? There is no night there -- one perpetual day. They worship around the throne of God continually. Some would limit the sermon to twenty minutes, especially those who go to church as a duty rather than to have their souls fed. In the sleepless, cloudless land we must be changed in our natures, else the monotony of perpetual existence would cause us to "steal outside the wall," as some anonymous writer has expressed in the attached poem. (We do not agree with the writer's conclusions, but give space to this because it so forcibly illustrates the thought.)

Where Never Any Died

In a long-vanished age, where varied story
No record has today,
So long ago expired its brief and glory --
There flourished, far away,

In a broad realm whose beauty passed all measure,
A city fair and wide;
Wherein the dwellers lived in peace and pleasure

And never any died.

Disease and pain and death, those stern marauders
Which mar our world's fair face,
Never encroached upon the pleasant borders
Of that bright dwelling place.

No fear of parting or dread of dying
Could ever enter there
No mourning for the lost, no anguished crying,
Made any face less fair.

Without the city walls, Death reigned as ever,
And graves rose side by side
Within, the dwellers laughed at his endeavor,
And never any died.

Oh happiest of all earth's favored places!
Oh bliss, to dwell therein
To live in the sweet light of loving faces,
And fear no graves between!

To feel no death-damp gathering cold and colder,
Disputing life's warm truth
To live on, never lonelier nor older,
Radiant in deathless youth.

And hurrying from the world's remotest quarters,
A tide of pilgrims flowed
Across broad plains and over mighty waters,
To find that blessed abode.

Where never death should come between and sever
Them from their loved apart
Where they might work, and will, and live forever,
Still holding heart to heart.

And so they lived in happiness and pleasure,
And grew in power and pride,
And did great deeds, and laid up store of treasure,
And never any died.

Many years rolled on, and saw them striving,
With unabated breath;
And other years still found and left them living
And gave no hope of death.

Yet listen, hapless soul, whom angels pity,
Craving a boon like this --
Mark how the dwellers in the wondrous city
Grew weary of their bliss.

One and another, who had been concealing
The pain of life's long thrall,
Forsook their pleasant places, and came stealing
Outside the wall.

Craving the wish that brooked no denying,
So long had it been crossed,
The blessed possibility of dying
The treasure they had lost.

Daily the current of rest-seeking mortals
Swelled to the broader tide,
Till none were left within the city's portals,
And graves grew green outside.

Would it be worth the having or the giving
The boon of endless breath?
Ah, for the weariness that comes of living
There is no cure but death!

Ours were indeed a fate deserving pity,
Were that sweet rest denied,
And few, methinks, would care to find the city
Where never any died.

No, this is not a description of heaven. God has provided "some better things for us." The change which our bodies will undergo, and the realm in which we will be placed, will be so adapted that we will never desire a change. To perpetual youth things could never become monotonous. An infinite God in infinite space, and an eternal existence will so harmonize that we will never have a desire to "steal outside the walls."

* * *

Surprises In Heaven

There will be great surprises in heaven. What they are we cannot tell. Probably the greatest of all -- that we are there; and find some people there that we did not expect. Man is far below God in knowledge and wisdom, and always will be. Man is subject to surprises in this and all worlds. In the world to come there will be new things to see; new voices to hear; and new sensations to feel, which in our greatest flights of fancy we never even dream in this world. There

can never be a dull moment in heaven; but one eternal round of varied pleasures (for all service there will be pleasure), whether in rest, observation, or service. "The Lord is a sun and a shield; He will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly."

* * *

Thoughts By Others

"Every saint in heaven is a flower in the garden of God, and holy love is the fragrance and sweet odor they will send forth, and with which they fill that paradise above. Every soul there is a note in some concert of delightful music, that sweetly harmonizes with every other note, and all blend together in the most rapturous strains in praising God and the Lamb forever." -- Jonathan Edwards.

"The joys of heaven will begin as soon as we attain the character of heaven and its duties. Try that and prove its truth -- as much goodness and piety, so much heaven." -- Theodore Parker.

"That city which God has prepared is as imperishable in its inhabitants as its materials. Its pearls, its jasper, its pure gold, are only immortal to frame the abode of immortals. No cry of death is in any of its dwellings. No funeral darkens along any of its ways. No sepulcher of the holiest relics gleam along the everlasting hills. "Violence is not heard in the land." "There is no more death." Its very name has perished, is swallowed up in victory." -- R. W. Hamilton.

"It will be our privilege to converse with holy men. 'Many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.' The word 'sit' literally means to recline at a table. So they are to have social converse with the patriarchs as well as with each other.

"You read of our knowledge being in part, but there we shall know as we are known. You read concerning those who shall obtain that world and the resurrection, that they cannot die any more, that they shall go no more out, and that the weight of glory which we look for is eternal. Hence, that the immortality promised to Christians is certain and absolute." -- Isaac Taylor.

"Here must be the heir, if yonder the reward. As he now adds excellence to excellence, as he is not now barren nor unfruitful, so shall an entrance be ministered to him abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." -- R. W. Hamilton.

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09 -- EMPLOYMENT IN HEAVEN

We are not told the exact nature of our employment in heaven. The material universe, as we have noted, even down to the smallest electron, is in motion. Heaven undoubtedly is a very active place. Suns and planets are speeding through the universe at terrific speeds. Nothing could be further from the truth than the old idea that in heaven the people are just sitting around, or lolling about, with nothing to do -- an idle, stagnant life. It is inconsistent to imagine a heaven in which the

saints would sit under the shade of the trees, or on the bank of the River of Life, twang a harp -- "perhaps a thousand strings" -- and spend an eternity in a do-nothing world!

"I could hardly wish to enter heaven did I believe its inhabitants were to sit idly by purling streams, fanned by balmy airs. Heaven, to be a place of happiness, must be a place of activity. Has the far-reaching mind of Newton ceased its profound investigations? Has David hung up his harp, as useless as the dusty arms in Westminster Abbey? Has Paul, glowing with godlike enthusiasm, ceased itinerating the universe of God? Are Peter and Cyprian and Edwards and Payson and Everett idling away eternity in mere psalm-singing? Heaven is a place of ceaseless activity, the abode of never-tiring thought." -- Beecher.

Idleness is not conducive to happiness. The "idle rich" are probably the most miserable class on earth. They flit like butterflies from one round of pleasure to another, each time seeking something that will give a greater thrill than the preceding. They exhaust their strength, their time and health in that which does not improve them or profit others. it could be no different in heaven. Work there will be enjoyment; there will be no drudgery, every one will like his work, and God will so arrange it that no one will ever be assigned to a task he is not fitted for, or that is to him, unpleasant. Who would want to go to a heaven where there would be nothing to occupy one's hands and mind?

Of employment in heaven, Dr. David Gregg in "The Heavenly Life" says, "Work up there is a matter of self-relief as well as a matter of obedience to the will of God. It is work according to one's taste, delight and ability. Work that is not to our liking becomes drudgery. If tastes and ability vary there, then occupations will vary there. Heaven is in every way broader than earth -- not narrower. God's government is there. The administration of government means active agencies. The jasper throne calls for work on thousands of lines."

* * *

Music In Heaven

The music in heaven will be far beyond anything that can be produced upon earth. There is no perfect music here. The undulations of the air that carry the vibrations of music to our ears are irregular, even if we had perfect voices and instruments. The waves of different tones -- soprano, alto, tenor, and bass are of different lengths. To form a "chord," thus making melody, the crests and troughs of these waves must fit into each other. Discord is produced when these waves do not harmonize. Our voices and instruments can only approximate complete conditions that produce exact harmony. Then, our ears are imperfect. There are many sounds that the human ear cannot detect. When we ascend the scale of sounds there comes a point where the ear fails to register any sound whatever. Some individuals have keener ears and can hear higher or lower notes than others. When we go down the scale, we come to a point where tones cease and noise begins. In the perfections of heaven, our ears will undoubtedly be improved, the celestial atmosphere will be a perfect medium for transmitting sounds, or there may be an entirely different means of communication. So --

"There'll be singing up in heaven,

Such as we have never known,
Where the angels sing the praises
Of the Lamb upon the throne;
Their sweet harps are ever tuneful,
And their voices always clear;
Oh, that we might be more like them,
While we serve the Master here."

* * *

Making Use Of Material Elements

The spectroscope discloses that the stars are composed of practically the same elements as our sun. We find in the earth the same elements that the spectroscope shows are in the sun, this we would naturally expect. In fact, scientists found evidence of certain elements in the sun before they were discovered in the earth. The conclusion naturally follows that if the sun-stars have elements in them, such as sodium, calcium, iron, magnesium, and many others, then their planets have the same elements, judging by what we have found in our sun and earth. If intelligent beings inhabit these planets, then they must make use of these elements much the same as we do of earth's elements. Otherwise what purpose could the Creator have had in putting these elements in other worlds? This would lead us to believe that these inhabitants have occupations that require the use of material substances; and that for their comfort and convenience they have arts and sciences similar, or probably greater than our own.

* * *

Our Renewed Powers For Use

We cannot conceive that God would put us in another world with renewed and enlarged powers of body and mind, and leave us with nothing to do. When God placed man in the Garden of Eden He gave him employment -- "to dress and keep it." This was delightful employment. When sin entered, a curse came upon the earth. God said, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake, in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground." This was the divine sentence pronounced upon the guilty pair, and entailed upon their posterity.

Toil then became burdensome. Before it was a delight. Instead of eating of the tree of life, now man's source of bodily nourishment was changed, he shall eat the herb of the field. The earth now grudgingly yields her fruit The thorn and the thistles sprang up and now contests man's right to the soil. If we reap a bountiful harvest we must fight the noxious weeds and insects. But the time will come when, "There shall be no more curse; the former things shall pass away" (Rev. 22:3). A redeemed and purified earth will have removed from it even the thorns and the thistles, the harmful germs that produce disease in our bodies, and the harmful insects that destroy vegetation. Then shall the desert blossom as the rose.

* * *

In Heaven's School

We are told that there is rejoicing in heaven among the angels over one sinner that repenteth. The angels are interested in things that happen upon the earth. An interesting statement is found in I Peter 1:12, concerning angels: "Which things the angels desire to look into." The thing the angels were manifesting such keen interest in was the prophetic references to the death of Christ, the gospel and, in fact, our salvation. In Ephesians 3:10 we find this passage: "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." Here it appears that the church furnishes the object lesson, the teachers, with the various ranks of angels attending the classes. The subject of the lesson is "The manifold wisdom of God."

Again, in I Cor. 4:9 is found another declaration of angelic study, with man in the center of the picture. "For we are made a spectacle . . . to angels." The word spectacle is the word from which we get the word theater. Here God's redeemed saints are put on exhibition with angels for students and admirers.

If the angels have employment, and delight to look into the manifold wisdom of God, we are quite sure the saints will have something to do when they get to heaven. If we become citizens of the universe, there will be realms of boundless extent to explore, and the fathomless grace of God to consider.

Another remarkable passage is found in Ephesians 2:4-7, "But God who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith He loved us . . . hath raised us up together, and made us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the AGES TO COME He might show the exceeding riches of His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."

At our best, we little appreciate the matchless, wonderful love of God in giving us salvation through Jesus Christ. But "in the ages to come" there will be much to learn. We will be students in Heaven's University. With God Himself as our teacher, or probably a saint such as St. Paul, who had such wonderful insight into divine things down here, and who has now graduated from Heaven's Finishing School. How marvelous it must have been to sit at His feet when He was on earth; but now, He has been in the presence of His Lord for thousands of years and with His great intellect and capacity to instruct, would He not be a wonderful teacher ?

The angels, never having experienced redemption, never having known the pangs of sin, never having been pursued by the wrath of God and felt themselves on the brink of a devil's hell, when they would have given a thousand worlds for one Christ -- these could not be our teachers. But we may be theirs. They sing "Holy, Holy" around the throne, but not the songs of Moses and the Lamb.

"And when we sing redemption's story
They will fold their wings,
For angels never felt the joy

Our salvation brings."

It indeed will be a spectacle to angels and men when the results of Jesus' sacrifice are put on exhibition. The samples will be there. The evidence will be there of the power of God through Jesus Christ to lift fallen humanity from the miry clay, pardon his sins, cleanse his nature, and elevate him to a position above that of angels. Once a sinner, steeped in sin and shame, without God and hope, yet snatched as a brand from the eternal burning, purified and made white -- the astonishment of angels!

* * *

Exalted To The Throne

God in His great mercy and wisdom has ordained that Jesus Christ, the One who was "tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin," and "who knoweth our frame," and can sympathize with us, is to be our judge. How wonderful to have such a Judge! He has qualified for that position by suffering more than we could ever suffer, being tempted, not only as we have been tempted, but with greater temptations than we could ever bear. Satan may contest our case and claim our souls; he may produce a list of our sins that is long and black, and we will have to acknowledge that all he says is true; but, thank God, we can show that across the page there is the red lines of Jesus' blood, and that the "old account was settled long ago," while we sing, --

"Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe,
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow."

Then there will be the "overcomers" who will be exalted to thrones and dominions. The promise is, "To him that overcometh, I will give to sit with me in my throne." As co-judge with Jesus, entrusted with judging angels. Jesus told His disciples, "Verily, I say unto you, that ye that have followed me in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye shall also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Those who were faithful stewards with the talents entrusted to them were to be rulers, some over five cities, and some over ten. From this we learn the high exaltation awaiting God's redeemed saints.

* * *

Worship In Heaven

All duty, work, occupation and employment in heaven will be essentially worship. In fact, the same applies on earth, if we were only wise enough to understand it. The apostle Paul exhorts us, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31). St. John tells us there stood a "great multitude which no man could number of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palms in their hands. And they cried with a loud voice, saying salvation Lo our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb . . . and all. the angels stood round about the

throne and about the elders, and the four beasts, and fell down before throne and worshipped God" (Rev. 7:9-11).

With sleepless eyes, keener perception, wonderfully invigorated bodies, with voices attuned anew, we will sing the praises of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ for redemption full and complete!

In our school days we probably debated the question: "Resolved, that there is more pleasure in pursuit than in possession." The affirmative more often won the decision. But none of us would choose the pleasures in the pursuit of heaven for the possession of that blessed estate. Too many find "Jordan a hard road to travel." Yet Jesus said, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light." In the pursuit, the value of the things sought is usually overestimated. When the pursuit ends in possession there is disappointment, because the object sought does not measure up to our expectations. We are never heroes but for a moment at a time. We may perform an unusual feat of mind or muscle, but when the applause ceases, the world raises the ante and says, 'Now, let us see you do it again, or better your record!' In the heavenly city the order is reversed -- there is more joy in the possession than in the pursuit. Our ship probably will not come into the heavenly port with flags gayly flying, bands playing, and all on board singing, or beautifully at ease. No, the rigging will be torn and ragged after the strong fight, the ship's sides will be battle-scarred; in fact, we may count ourselves happy to reach shore, as did St. Paul and his sailors, some on broken planks or flotsam of the sea.

Why should there not be worship in heaven? Who would not want to join that innumerable company around the throne and praise Him who has redeemed us with His own precious blood and given us a place in His everlasting kingdom! We are prone to underestimate the unsearchable riches of Christ; and how else could it be when, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things God has prepared for them that love Him?" Indeed, we may exclaim with the Queen of Sheba, "The half has never been told!"

* * * * *

10 -- FITNESS FOR HEAVEN

When we were born into this world we were given a body that was adapted to earth conditions. Hence, we were given eyes with which to see, ears to hear, feet with which to walk, hands to labor, a digestive system to assimilate the food by which our bodies would grow and be nourished. We were given lungs and other organs by which our blood is purified and filtered. The air we breathe is composed of certain gases, mixed in proper proportions. If the percentage of oxygen in the air was a little more, our bodies would burn up. The Creator knew the realm in which we would spend our earthly existence and "fearfully and wonderfully" made our bodies.

We are told that there is no atmosphere on the moon, and also on some of the planets. No moisture is there. If we should have been born on the moon, or one of these planets, with bodies such as we have, our life indeed would have been of short duration. God has made wonderful provision in nature for maintaining the proper proportion of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the air. Vegetation feeds on carbon dioxide gas and gives off oxygen. The animal creation consumes

oxygen and gives off carbon dioxide. We constantly need changes of air. When the vegetation in the northern hemisphere in the winter time is "dead" the southern hemisphere is verdant, and vice versa. The air currents mix and carry these gases over the world so that the vegetable and animal kingdoms are amply supplied.

* * *

A Superintending Providence

If any one should ever doubt that there is a Wise Creator who rules and governs in the universe, let him explain how these things happened to be so. Consider, if the sun were a few million miles closer to us, what the effect would be. The earth would be burned up by the intense heat in a short time. Then, if the moon should have been placed a few thousand miles closer to the earth, the tides would be so great that the entire globe would be inundated every twenty-four hours. If the earth did not revolve on its axis each day, and should keep one side turned to the sun all the time, the heat would be so intense on that side as to make it uninhabitable; and the side turned away from the sun would be dark and intensely cold. Again, "natural selection" does not satisfactorily explain the fact that the ratio between the sexes -- male and female -- is kept in balance. Things like these do not just happen.

* * *

Preparation For Heaven

Does it not appear reasonable that God would be more interested in preparing us for the realm where we are to spend our eternal existence than He has been for our short-time earthly life? We had nothing to do with our coming into this world, we did not come of our free choice. However, if it had been possible for us to have had a choice, without doubt, every one would have chosen to come into the world; even if we knew beforehand that we would have a soul to save or to be lost, depending upon our free choice. It is foolish to say that, since we had no choice in coming into the world, we will make no choice in going hence.

What have we to do, if anything, with the preparation for the world to come? Everything. We are given a choice, "choose ye this day whom ye will serve." "I have set before you the way of life and of death." God has made the basis of our happiness dependent upon our choices. He created us with free wills. Any creature not having this could not glorify God. To force one into heaven would by no means assure happiness to such an individual. Some men are far better off in the penitentiary than they ever were outside of it. There they will live longer and fare better. There they have food, clothing, medical attention, spiritual advisers, employment and protection. On the outside they never had many of these things; and if they were set free today, their needs and wants would multiply tomorrow. Yet they are not happy in such surroundings, they are continually watching for some means to escape. The reason is, they are there against their wills, and no matter how comfortable may be their lot, they chafe under it. One may be reduced by misfortune and ill health to poverty. He dreads the thought of having to spend his days on the County Farm. However, if he were placed there, he would have at State expense food, clothing, medical care, nurses to

wait on him, and pleasant surroundings -- things he never had elsewhere -- yet who wants to go to the "Poorhouse?" It would not be one's choosing.

Jesus went to prepare a place for us, and He sent the Holy Spirit into the world to prepare us for the place. The work is going on at both ends of the line. "Whosoever WILL may take of the water of life freely," is one of the last promises in the Bible. Happy is that soul here who forsakes all sin -- the only thing that will keep one out of heaven -- and happy hereafter in a world that shall never end.

* * *

A Reasonable Requirement

The idea of fitness for the enjoyment of heaven is not only reasonable, but it is according to Scripture. How could one who is a blackguard, a blasphemer, a sensualist enjoy the company of the holy in a world where nothing is vile? He would seek to escape at the first opportunity. In fact, such a person cannot enjoy the company of good men in this world, much less in a world where the angels sing, "Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty," day and night, and the redeemed sing the songs of Moses and the Lamb. To place such a person in those blissful realms would end his pleasures for ever.

"I have read of a man who had amassed great wealth, but he had no children to inherit it. He lost the opportunity, which one would think good men would more frequently embrace, of leaving Christ his heir, and bequeathing to the cause of religion what he could not carry away. Smitten, however, with a vain and strange propensity to found a house, or make a family, as it is called, he left his riches to a distant relative. His successor found himself suddenly raised from poverty to affluence, and thrown into a position which he had not been trained to fill. He was cast into the society of those to whose tastes, and habits, and accomplishments he was an utter and an awkward stranger. Did many envy this child of fortune? They might have spared their envy. Left in his original obscurity he had been a happy peasant, whistling his way home from the plow to a thatched-roofed cottage, or on winter nights, and around the blazing faggots, laughing loud and merry among unpolished boors. Child of misfortune! he buried his happiness in the grave of his benefactor. Neither qualified by nature, not fitted by education, for the position, he was separated from his old, only associates only to be despised by his new associates. And how bitterly was the disappointment to find, that, in exchanging poverty for opulence, daily toil for luxurious indolence, humble friends for more distinguished companions, a hard bed for one of down, this turn in his fortune had flung him upon a couch, not of roses, but of thorns! In his case, the hopes of the living and the intentions of the dead were alike frustrated. The prize had proved a blank; a necessary result of this fatal oversight, that the heir had not been made meet for the inheritance.

"Is such training needful to an earthly estate? How much more for the "inheritance of the saints in light!" -- Thomas Guthrie.

* * *

Our Record Will Be There

We will carry our record with us to another life. We are told that the "books will be opened and we will be judged out of the things written therein." It may be that the bookkeepers of the sky have entirely different, but very accurate, methods of recording the events of our lives. We are promised that our sinful record will be "buried in the depths of the sea . . . that our sins will be remembered against us no more forever." The blood of Jesus can so effectually blot out our sins that even Satan cannot find them! We cannot escape our record. Jesus said, "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; and hid that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops" (Matt. 10:26, 27).

Our record may be reproduced by natural means, even by the light and sound waves that pulsate through the universe. If we could project ourselves into space at the speed of light, we could see the events of our lives continued as they happen. Likewise, if we could travel at the rate of speed equal to that of sound, we would hear a sound continually. To illustrate: Suppose one could be fired from a cannon at a rate that sound travels, he would hear one continuous roar of the gun. If he traveled faster than sound, he would not hear the sound of the gun at all. If we should travel through space faster than light, the events of our lives would be in reverse order. The soldier on the battlefield might see the bullet coming out of his body, and himself coming to life. This is like reversing the film in the movie camera, one may see himself falling up the roof of a house instead of falling off.

In order to check the record of the events in our lives, all that would be necessary would be to go out into space to the end of the light waves that proceeded from our body at the time the event occurred, sit down and watch the picture go by! Assuming that light and sound waves continue indefinitely, our entire history could thus be revealed. It may be thought that by doing a thing of that kind we would project ourselves an enormous distance into space, and that we would soon be a "long way from home!" But in a universe of infinite magnitude it would make no difference, because we would always, no matter where we were, be as near the center of things in one place as another. Moreover, our rate of travel would not be even that of the rate of light, but of thought. God's book of life would then be opened, and those who cared could read our record.

Not only this, but we evidently will carry into the next world all of our faculties of mind; we are assured that some of them will follow us. The rich man in the story of Dives and Lazarus had his memory. Father Abraham told him to remember that in yonder life he had his good things and Lazarus the evil things. He also had sympathy, for he did not want his brothers to come to that place. Then, we most assuredly will have love, affection, and doubtless other sensibilities in the world to come.

Psychologists tell us that we never really forget anything. Impressions made on the mind may lay dormant for years, but by some association, events will flash before us and we will recall scenes we had not thought of probably since childhood. Passing an old house along a country road, we may instantly recall our old home, and then live over some of the events that happened years ago. Before she died, it is said, Queen Victoria had some phonographic records made of her speeches; these were filed away and generations hence may be reproduced. Our minds may be likened to such records and these be carried over into the next world where they will be reproduced to our delight, or perhaps, chagrin.

We quote from a writer these words: "To souls in heaven, whose acts consist of desire, will and accomplishment -- three acts on earth -- are only one in heaven. There can be no such obstacle as distance, no such barrier as the physical, no such impatience as time. From earth to any part of heaven may to our minds on earth, be millions of miles; yet, out of the body, the distance surely is but the journey of a thought, the measure of a wish, the operation of the will, the period of a moment! We may comprehend that, in heaven, accomplishment follows will immediately as will succeeds desire; therefore, the open universe is, by soul, traversed in an incomputable instant. So, we may visit and know all the beaming glories of the sky, to which we now raise our awe-inspired eyes when night closes the landscape from view, and the curtaining clouds of God's hands have been drawn aside. Here, from afar, borne by His will in majestic unending succession across the measureless arch of the heavens, there we will see physical cradles for souls in the unbounded home of spirit!"

* * *

At The Fall Of The Curtain

The curtain is falling, and the lights burn low,
So, with God's help, I am ready to go;
I've seen life's melodrama, paid the price,
Have known its loves and losses, hopes and fears
Laughter and tears,
And now, God knows, I would not see it twice.

I've crossed life's ocean, faced the blinding foam,
But now heaven whispers I am nearing home;
And though a storm-tossed hull I reach the shore,
A thing of tattered sheets and broken spars,
Naked against the stars,
O soon shall be at peace forever more.

For, if again I pass these waters through,
I know the kingdom I am sailing to,
What boots it where I lie? beneath the sod,
Or down the dark, impenetrable deep,
Where wayworn sailors sleep?
All gates are good through which to pass to God.*

--Anon.

* * *

*This statement is true if by it is meant that any gateway through which God leads the soul to himself is good, no matter how difficult, no matter if it leads through death and the grave. However, if one should take the statement "All gates are good through which to pass to God" to

mean that "All religions and beliefs are good through which to pass to God," then it would state a terrible error! For, only through "Strait Gate and Narrow Way" taught by Christ and delineated by His Word may one successfully "pass to God" so as to dwell with Him in heaven. -- DVM

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THE END