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HEAVEN
Our Father's House
Our Heavenly Home
God's City of Gold

By W. G. Heslop

Printed for The Peniel Press
2052 Horton Ave. S.E.,
Grand Rapids, Michigan
By the Nazarene Publishing House

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W. G. Heslop,
2052 Horton Ave., S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan

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COMPANION VOLUMES BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Gems From Genesis
Extras From Exodus
Riches From Revelation
Diamonds From Daniel

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To My Faithful Friend

Fred T. Fuge

This volume is lovingly dedicated by the author.

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INTRODUCTION

All Christians are interested in heaven the future abode of God's children. In fact people who may not enjoy a vital Christian life through a definite relationship with Christ manifest an unusual interest in this subject. The most popular gospel songs are those which tell of Jesus and heaven. Close to the favorite, "The Old Rugged Cross," are such songs as "No Disappointment in Heaven," "The Sweet Bye and Bye," "When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder" and those of a similar nature.

The questions most frequently asked in a public question box are those about the future life. "Where are the dead?" "Are they in a conscious state of existence?" "After death will we know them?" "Will we be able to converse with them?" "What change will the resurrection make in the present state of the dead?" All of these indicate that people are unusually interested in the future life.

This book has been written to give light on the subject of heaven and to answer many of these questions concerning the future life. Doctor Heslop, the author, has for years been an ardent Bible student. He has had a long experience as a Bible teacher, all of which has given him a wide grasp of the scriptural teaching on this subject. He brings an array of scriptural statements to substantiate his teachings.

The reading of this book will bring comfort to those whose loved ones have departed to be with the Lord; it will inspire those who may be disheartened to continue the good fight of faith; it will encourage those who may have a tendency to discouragement because of the conditions existing in this present wicked world; it will brighten the hope of all who are followers of Christ and who are walking toward that city of gold; it will help us to be patient while we pass our pilgrimage here looking "for that city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God."

D. Shelby Corlett.

* * * * *

Where are the dead?

What are they doing?

Shall we see them again?

Shall we know them?

Will they know us?

Is death an eternal sleep?
Do we survive the chemical change called death?
Does man lie down on the couch of his everlasting sleep?
After death. What? How? Where?
Between death and burial. What?
Between burial and resurrection. What?
During the Millennium. What?
After the Millennium. What?
The ages to come. What?

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Heaven Is To Be Our Home

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Paul felt in the depths of his soul that the life of the Christian, as it subsists in faith now, can only subsist in hope of the future. Without this assumed view of the future, the whole Christian life appears in his eyes as endeavors without an object, the pursuit of a phantom, the sport of a delusion. For the life of other men is directed to the higher or lower aims which are to be attained in intellectual pursuits, or in the gratification of the senses and which can be actually attained on earth. But the life of Christians, with all its conflicts, efforts, and renunciations, refers to an object that has no truth, if it be not realized in the eternal life of the future. -- Neander.

* * * * *

Chapter 1

THE QUESTION OF QUESTIONS

"If a man die shall he live again?" is one of the burning questions of the day. It trembles on a thousand quivering lips and springs into a million bleeding hearts.

To every home death comes and to every one it is appointed once to die. After death! What? Extinction? Destruction? Annihilation? An endless sleep? What is there after death?

"If a man die shall he live again?"

Not only do our deepest instincts and noblest aspirations cry out for continued existence and long life -- not only is it a fact that the best and longest earthly life is imperfect and incomplete, -- not only does our sense of justice and right demand a future state, -- not only is the universal conviction of the conscience of the race in favor of a life beyond the tomb, -- but the revelation of God which we call the Bible assures us in no ambiguous or uncertain terms that -- man may die, but that he shall also rise from the dead. So much is certainly settled.

Out of the welter of wishful hopes, out of the sphere of strong forebodings, out of the perennial reasonings, peradventures and probabilities, the Word of God transports us to a world of fact, assurance and certainty.

Death, to the Christian is but a lift to a larger life. Death to the believer in Jesus Christ, is but the doorway to a house not made with hands.

Death, to the faithful follower of the lowly Nazarene is but the vestibule to an eternal home in the heaven of heavens.

Death, to the Christian is simply the ending of his happy but weary march to His Father's White House.

The believer's death day is really his best birthday -- the time of his greatest triumph.

Of all the happy days, the death day will be the happiest of all. The day of his birth, -- the day of his coming of age, -- the day of his conversion, -- the day of his entire sanctification, -- the day of his marriage, -- the day of honor, -- and all other days are as nothing compared to the delightful death day which shall usher him into His Father's House on High.

The writer shall gladly exchange this body, with its headaches and temple throbbings and heart pains and weaknesses too numerous to mention, for an incorruptible body that shall never know ache or accident, pain or punishment, decay or death, and for a glimpse of the glorious jasper gates which shall mean entrance into the presence of God and the eternal friendship of Jesus and all the saints.

Death is only the rude hand that snaps the fetters and emancipates the soul.

Death is only the bridal peal calling the sanctified soul to its everlasting espousals.

Death is the door opener into a city without sin, sorrow or suffering, a sunrise without a sunset. Toil and trouble, trial and temptation shall be only a memory. O Death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Cease your talk of the blighting of early promise and the premature death of the young and beautiful. They need none of your pity. Pity the living, be kindly affectionate to those who must stay and fight the good fight of faith, but do not pity the righteous dead, for they are hilariously happy and blessed for ever.

Pity the caterpillar if you please, but not the beautiful butterfly.

Pity the ugly bulb that must rot in the earth, but not the lily that adorns the pulpit on Easter Sunday morning. The butterfly and lily are symbols of the saints who have died in the Lord. To the Christian, death is the stiller of strife and the calmer of care.

Death does not rob the pure of anything worth possessing. Death is not an eternal sleep to the saints who die in the Lord. Death is no longer the King of Terrors to the loving follower of the Lamb.

Like the evening hour of rest to the exhausted laborer-the believer passes from pain to Paradise.

Think of it what you please but this humble scribe feels and knows his kinship with the skies. This world even now fails to bind his soul and submerge his spirit. Burning worlds swinging in their bright orbits throw up no barriers against the swift feet of his soul's soaring imagination.

Beyond the limits of all creation he sends his love and thoughts, and, grasps divinity. His body may wax old as doth a garment but he feels even now bigger than his frail body. He knows that he is more than acids and phosphates, flesh and bone. He lifts his weary head and sometimes heavy heart to the Father God whose hand "guideth Arcturus with his sons." His redeemed soul scales the highest hills and lays hold of the living God "who bindeth the sweet influences of the Pleiades." He is happy to be privileged to spend and be spent in the exhilarating service of Him who "looseth the bands of Orion" and he knows that the same guiding, binding, loosing Hand is the hand of his heavenly Father.

Break away from God the Heavenly Father if you please, and, by so doing plunge yourself into the blackness of darkness and the horrors of chaotic night, but as for this scribe he chooses to serve God, live grandly, die happily and spend eternity in his heavenly Father's home. The soul within him feels his wings, begging to be borne and almost impatient for the skies. He has hopes that refuse to be bounded by the tomb. He has desires and longings which grasp eternity, immortality, and God.

* * * * *

Oh, weep not for the dead!
Rather, oh! rather give the tear
To those that darkly linger here,
When all besides are fled.
Weep for the spirit withering
In its cold, cheerless sorrowing;
Weep for the young and lovely one,
That ruin darkly revels on;
But never be a tear-drop shed
For them, the pure enfranchised dead.

* * *

Oh, mourn not for the dead, in youth who passed away,
Ere peace and joy and bliss have fled, and sin has brought decay.
Better in youth to die, life being fair and bright,
Than when the soul has lost its truth, in age and sorrow's night.
Then shed not the tear of grief upon the sable bier,
Her wearied spirit finds a rest, in a more blissful sphere.

* * *

I rejoice in the glory to be revealed, for it is no uncertain glory we look for. Our hope is not hung upon Such an untwisted thread as I imagine so, or it is likely, but the cable of the strong tow of our fastened anchor is the oath and promise of Him who is eternal verity. Our salvation is fastened with God's own hand, with Christ's own strength, to the strong strap of God's unchangeable nature.

Let us be ballasted with grace that we be not blown over and that we stagger not. I never believed till now that there was so much to be found in Christ on this side of death and heaven. How sweet, how sweet is our investment! -- Samuel Rutherford.

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Chapter 2 ANGELS

The sacred Scriptures are full of the supernatural. The heavens and the earth are filled with active, earnest, zealous spirit beings. Seraphim and cherubim, morning stars and sons of the morning unite in their adoration of Jehovah of hosts. Unholy angels, demons and seducing spirits under the leadership of fallen Lucifer seek to defeat the plans and purposes of a good and gracious God. The holy angels are mighty in power, executioners of God's wrath and also ministering spirits to the saints.

Some of the most important truths of scripture were given by holy angels, i.e., "Not by might nor by power but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."

The angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought out Peter and John (Acts 5:19, 20).

The angel of the Lord instructed Philip (Acts 8:26).

An angel of God instructed Cornelius (Acts 11:13, 14).

The angel of the Lord smote Peter on the side and raised him up (Acts 12:7, 8).

An angel encouraged Paul (Acts 27:24).

Four startling announcements were made by four angelic beings concerning Christ.

1. Birth.

Luke 2:11: "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

2. Death.

Luke 9:31: "Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem."

3. Resurrection.

Luke 24:6: "He is not here, but is risen; remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee."

4. Second Coming.

Acts 1:11: "Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

Angels have names.

1. Gabriel (Dan. 8:16-26; 9:21-27).

2. Michael (Dan. 10:13, 14; Jude 1:9; Rev. 12:7).

3. Lucifer (Isa. 14:12-14).

The angel of the Lord foretold the birth of Ishmael (Gen. 16:7-12).

The angel of the Lord foretold the birth of Isaac. (Gen. 18:9-14).

The angel of the Lord foretold the birth of Samson (Judges 13:3-18).

Gabriel foretells the birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:13-20).

Gabriel foretells the birth of Christ (Luke 1:26-37).

The angel of the Lord appears unto Joseph (Matt. 1:20, 21).

The angel of the Lord announces the birth of Christ to the shepherds (Luke 2:13-16).

An angel cursed the people of Meroz (Judges 5:23).

An angel appeared to Ezekiel (Ezek. 2:1; 3:3).

An angel touched Daniel (Dan. 8:13,14; Dan. 10:18-21; Dan. 12:7-13).

An angel talked with Zechariah (Zech. 1:9-19).

One angel instructs another angel (Zech. 2:3-5).

The angel of the Lord gives a message unto Joshua, the high priest (Zech. 3:6-10).

An angel conveys the Word of the Lord for Zerubbabel (Zech. 4:6).

A strong angel proclaimed, "Who is worthy to open the book?" (Rev. 5:2).

A special convoy of 100,000,000 angels surround the throne and the saints in heaven (Rev. 5:11).

Multiplied thousands of angels proclaim the worthiness of Christ (Rev. 5:11, 12).

There are messenger, mercy and judgment angels (Rev. 7:2, 3; Rev. 8:13).

All the angels worship God (Rev. 7:11,12).

Angels understand human language (Rev. 10:9-11).

Angels bear good news and give warnings to men (Rev. 14:6-11).

Angels demand death for willful transgressors (Rev. 14:15-18).

Angels talked with John on the Isle of Patmos (Rev. 17:1-18).

Angels are luminous and glorious creatures (Rev. 18:1-3).

A mighty angel took up a stone and cast it into the sea as an object lesson to John (Rev. 18:21).

The angel of the Lord rebuked the people of God at Bochim (Judges 2:1-5).

The angel of the Lord called to Hagar (Gen. 21:17, 18).

The angel of the Lord called unto Abraham (Gen. 22:15-18).

Two angels talked to Lot (Gen. 19:2-22).

The angel of God spake unto Jacob (Gen. 28:13-15; Gen. 31:11-13; Gen. 32:24-30).

The angel of the Lord appeared to Moses (Ex. 3:2-6).

The angel of the Lord rebuked Balaam (Num. 22:22-35).

A man with his sword drawn appeared to Joshua (Josh. 5:13-15).

The angel of the Lord appeared unto Gideon (Judges 6:11-24).

An angel touched Elijah (1 Kings 19:5-7).

The angel of the Lord warns Joseph (Matt. 2:13; Matt. 2:19, 20).

An angel answered the women at the sepulcher (Matt. 28:5-7).

Angels command the fowls of the air (Rev. 19:17, 18).

Angels are fellowservants (Rev. 22:8-17). Lazarus was carried by angels to his paradise home of rest and comfort and the same pleasant surprise awaits all the departing children of God. These angels belong to a world of perennial springtime and are perpetually youthful.

"Entering into the tomb they saw a young man."

Was this young man Moses or Enoch or Elijah or an angel?

In either case the lesson is the same. He was a young man. The land to which we are going is a land of perennial springtime and perpetual youth.

* * * * *

"See the guardian angels nigh
Wait to waft my soul on high!
See the golden gates displayed!
See the crown to grace my head!
See a flood of sacred light,
Which shall yield no more to night!
Transitory world, farewell!
Jesus calls with Him to dwell."

* * *

Oh, fear not thou to die!
Far rather fear to live, -- for life
Hath thousand snares by faith to try,
By peril, pain and strife.
Brief is the work of death,
But life! the spirit shrinks to see,
How full ere heaven recalls the breath,
The cup of woe may be.

Oh, fear not thou to die!
No more, to suffer or to sin;
No snares without thy faith to try,
No traitor heart within.
But fear, oh, rather fear,
The gay, the light, the changeful scene
The flattering smiles that greet thee here,
From heaven thy heart to wean.

* * *

KEYS:

"We shall be like Him."

"We Shall be with Him."

"We shall see Him."

"He is comforted."

"Blessed are the dead -- in the Lord."

"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

"Absent from the body, at home with the Lord."

"We shall be like Him for we shall see Him."

"To depart is to be with Christ, which is far better."

"To die is gain."

"We shall be like Him."

* * * * *

Chapter 3

BETWEEN DEATH AND BURIAL. WHAT?

Death is a crisis. Naturally we shrink from it. The separation of soul and body is a very serious event. It looks like launching out against the will into some wild and unexplored region. We are ignorant and afraid. To the Christian, however, death is only a transition. To the saint, death is a birth into a fuller life. To the loving child of God, death is not a leap into the dark, but a closing of the eyes HERE on earth and opening them THERE in Paradise. I am not now speaking of the possible pain which may precede death but of the actual crisis of dying. Even the possible pains may be the birth pangs of a better beginning.

To the child of God, the act of dying may involve pleasure rather than pain. Death is not an executioner to cut off the Christian, but the simple separation of a saved soul and sanctified spirit from a weak, frail, weary, mortal body.

Death is not only much less dark and despairing than we generally imagine, it is also much less lonesome than we think. To the faithful follower of Christ, death is a much less dreadful enemy than is generally expected. Lazarus was "carried by the angels." Loving watchers are waiting to accompany the departing soul of the saved as it passes into the world which is now unseen by us.

The first Christian to die after the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom we have an account, was Stephen. His passing may be a guide as to just what takes place when a sanctified man crosses the line of worlds. As Stephen was about to succumb because of the stonings and smittings, he saw his Savior standing on the right hand of God and as he fell asleep he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." The outlook is thus far from gloomy if the uplook is good.

Here is a glimpse of the glory and gladness that await all those who die in the Lord.

Death does not mean non-existence, unconsciousness, extinction or annihilation. A person may be dead in the Bible sense of the word and yet have a conscious existence. Death is only a

station stop in man's journey and not the terminus. The following scriptures prove beyond quibble or question that a person may be said to be dead and yet have a conscious existence or conscious being.

1. Ephesus 2:1: "And you hath he quickened who were dead."
2. Luke 15:24: "This my son was dead."
3. 1 Timothy 5:6: "She that liveth in pleasure is dead."

The death of a believer is described as a falling asleep. This refers only to the body.

John 11:11-14: "These things said he: and after that he said unto them, Our friend Lazarus, sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death; but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead."

It is clear that Christ refers to the body and not to the soul of Lazarus. This is confirmed by the words of Martha who said, "By this time he stinketh." It was the body only that was in the mind of the disciples and the Master.

That sleep has reference to the body only is made doubly sure by Matthew 27:52: "Many bodies of the saints which slept arose." It does not say that, "many of the saints which slept arose," as if the saints were sleeping but, "many bodies which slept arose."

Death to the child of God is a "putting off" of the earthly tabernacle, a "departing" to be with Christ which is far better ' a falling "asleep" to awaken in a fairer world for "to die is gain."

The ecstatic glories of the heavenly state and place exceed by far the most vivid descriptions of the most fertile pen and brain. The sublimest symbols and signs of sacred scripture are but feeble and faint adumbrations of the glory which awaits the glorified sons of God.

Between death and burial, -- the SOUL, -- the PERSON, -- is comforted, -- is at HOME, -- blessed, -- with Christ, -- and LIKE HIM.

* * * * *

Oh, heaven is nearer than mortals think,
When they look with trembling dread,
At the misty future that stretches on,
From the silent home of the dead.

The eye that shuts in a dying hour,
Will open the next in bliss,
The welcome will sound in the heavenly world
Ere the farewell is hushed in this.

* * *

And our beloved have departed,
While we tarry, broken-hearted,
In the dreary, empty house;
They have ended life's brief story,
They have reached their home of glory,
Over death victorious.

Hush that sobbing, weep more lightly,
On we travel, daily, nightly
To the rest that they have found.
Are we not upon the river
Sailing fast, to meet forever
On more holy, happy ground?

* * *

I believe with all my being in immortality. -- Emma Bailey Speer.

I am glad to have this opportunity of recording publicly my unshakable belief in immortality. -- Nathan Straus.

We cannot escape the belief and conviction that inevitably "this mortal shall put on immortality" with no loss of that which here on earth belongs to personality and character. -- James L. Barton.

We may on many things differ about Jesus but it would be quite impossible to think of Him as not being alive. -- Peter Ainslie.

History assures me that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, demonstrating that His soul did not perish when separated from His body. The resurrection proves that Christ was God. Therefore, He spoke with knowledge and with truth when He declared that the souls of men live after death. -- John A. Ryan.

* * * * *

Chapter 4 AFTER DEATH AND BURIAL, WHAT?

For six thousand long and weary years death has reigned over all the sons and daughters of Adam's race. With the exception of Enoch, Elijah and the saints who will be alive when Jesus comes again, no one has escaped or can escape the power and presence of death.

From the pompous prince upon his throne to the penniless pauper on the poor farm-all have been visited and conquered by death. A better day however, is to dawn, for, in dying on the cross, Christ not only redeemed the race, but abolished death. Death has been defeated and death shall be destroyed and die (2 Tim. 1:10).

Death shall yet be done away, put an end to, annulled, abolished, destroyed. Death itself shall die and "there shall be no more death" (Rev. 21:4).

The instant in which a Christian passes from earth, in the crisis which we call death, he will find himself in the presence of his special guardian angels who have been with him since birth and who have followed him during his entire pilgrimage.

A sweet consciousness of ascending, rising upward, will fill his whole being with delight.

Ushered into the presence of his adorable Lord and Savior he will feast without interruption on the glories and perfections of his loving Lord and King.

Having left time and space behind him he will be introduced to the saints of all the ages. Sitting down without fear of any interrupting telephone calls or honking automobiles he will listen to Adam tell of the wonders of the original creation. Selah.

Introduced to Eve she will tell of the happy hours spent in walking with God in the Garden lost but now regained.

How entrancing to listen to Abel as he describes his own personal experience of redeeming love and grace and how he received the witness of the Spirit that he was righteous.

With what rapture as one listens to Enoch tell of his secret walks with God, the sublime truths revealed to him by his God and how he came to exercise faith to be raptured. Selah.

How wonderful to talk to Noah and without any consciousness of passing time, meals to be cooked, dishes to be washed or furniture to be polished, released by death from all physical hindrances and drinking of the water of life, hear from the preacher of righteousness the sublime story of the Flood and the Ark.

What a sensation to be in the presence of the saintly Job and hear him relate the story of his remarkable life and once again hear him say, "I know that my redeemer liveth." This will certainly be a shouting point.

Think of being in a world without an alarm clock ticking away the moments or meters ticking away the dollars, a world where rent never comes due, and restfully conversing with Melchisedek, hearing him tell how he first met the Lord God and how he was called into the ministry.

How gratifying to meet Abraham and hear him tell of his conversion and sanctification and call to be the father of the faithful and then meet Lot who was delivered from damnation by an angel.

With what rapture and ecstasy will the happy soul fellowship and converse with Jacob and Rachel as they praise God for his glorious grace.

With what measure of merrymaking and elysium delight will we meet the mighty Moses and sit down without fear of interruption and listen to his sublime story of salvation and join in the song of Moses and the Lamb.

With what gladness and glee shall we meet the dutiful Daniel as with sparkling eyes he tells of the lions getting the lockjaw and describes his deliverance by the angel of God.

Think of meeting the three holy Hebrews and hearing them relate their deliverance from the burning fiery furnace.

With what fascination, unalloyed pleasure and delight shall we fellowship King David as he describes his experience of the grace and goodness of God and with all sin not only forgiven but forgotten he picks up his harp and sweeps the keys and strings with a hallelujah chorus without a conclusion. Here will be another shouting point.

Then, to meet all the apostles of the New Testament from John to Peter and Paul and hear words of truth and soberness as they tell of the wonders of redeeming love. THIS will be heaven in its beginnings.

It has been the privilege of the writer to see and experience many wonderful things on land and on sea. Having circumnavigated the globe, crossing the Atlantic many times in storm and in calm, traversing the broad expanse of the generally peaceful but sometimes turbulent Pacific, preaching and witnessing in thirteen different countries, and to twenty-two different nationalities, the writer has seen and experienced many, very many, wonderful, curious, startling and strange things, but, he expects that at his own death hour he shall see and experience more wonderful and more exciting things in the unseen world which shall open before him. All the stupendous and startling changes which have taken place here are but passing trifles compared with the first few hours in the beautiful life and world beyond. Oh, the holiness and happiness in our Father's house! Oh, the glory and grandeur of one glad hour in our heavenly Home!

The writer is not afraid of death. He is unafraid -- not because of any natural bravery which he possesses, and not because of any native brutishness or carelessness, unfeelingness or indifference, but because he knows-he is informed-and because of this knowledge, this information, he is unafraid of the last enemy, for Christ has extracted its sting.

"The sting of death is SIN."

Sin was dealt with by Christ on Calvary and death left its sting in the crucified body of our Lord Jesus Christ. Death makes no change in character. Death simply removes the covering, flesh.

The soul -- the spirit -- the personality -- the self -- the character, is just the same one moment AFTER death as it was one moment BEFORE death. The mere fact and act of dying does not change either character or destiny.

Death simply ushers the soul into a new atmosphere or environment and to the Christian it will be an atmosphere or environment more conducive to growth, more helpful to holiness, more favorable for the exercise of all the faculties of the soul and spirit and more adaptable to the acquisition of the knowledge of God, truth and holiness.

Consciousness, memory, love, holiness, truth, character will be quickened, deepened and increased. "Love never faileth." In that lovely land where rust doth not corrupt and where thieves cannot enter, the true treasures of memory, disciplined and purified powers, enlarged and Sanctified hearts shall everlastingly increase in the knowledge of God and His Christ.

* * * * *

What shall we be, and whither shall we go,
When the last conflict of our life is o'er,
And we return from wandering to and fro
To our dear home through heaven's eternal door,
When we shake off the last dust from our feet,
When we wipe off the last drop from our brow,
And our departed friends once more shall greet,
The hope which cheers and comforts us below?

What shall we be, when we ourselves shall see,
Bathed in the flood of everlasting light,
And from all guilt and sin entirely free,
Stand pure and blameless in our Maker's sight:
No longer from His holy presence driven,
Conscious of guilt, and stung with inward pain;
But friends of God and citizens of heaven,
To join the ranks of His celestial train?

* * *

O tell me no more
Of this world's vain store;
The time for these trifles with me now is o'er,
A country I've found
Where true joys abound;
To dwell I'm determined on that happy ground.

The souls that believe,
In paradise live;
And me in that number will Jesus receive.

My soul, don't delay,
He calls thee away,
Rise, follow thy Savior, and bless the glad day.

No mortal doth know
What He can bestow,
What light, strength, and comfort do after Him go.
So onward I move,
And, but Christ above,
None guesses how wondrous the journey will prove.

* * *

Beyond question the soul is imperishable. -- Socrates.

I believe in immortality because we mortals are shot through with gleams of immortality.

I believe in personal immortality because the faculties which enter into and make real personality are immortal, i.e., they are not subject to death.

Mind, consciousness, will, appreciation, memory, faith, hope, love, these last on -- they may change form; they cannot cease. -- Arn S. Allen.

"We do not believe in immortality because we have proved it, but we forever try to prove it because we believe it." -- Martineau.

If immortality is a delusion, it is the most inspiring delusion that ever possessed the human breast. It has wiped away more tears, inspired more courage, radiated more sunshine, and kindled more hope in dreary lives than any other expectation whatsoever. -- James E. Crowther.

* * * * *

Chapter 5

WHERE ARE THE DEAD? WHAT ARE THEY DOING?

Where are the dead? Where are the sainted dead, those who died in the Lord? Just what is the state of the dead between the death and the resurrection of the body?

In the account given to us by Christ of the death of the rich man and Lazarus we have a clear intimation of the future of those who sleep in Jesus. Both the rich man, and Lazarus the beggar had died, and their bodies had been given back to earth, ashes to ashes and dust to dust.

The rich man in the intermediate state could SEE, for he saw Abraham and Lazarus in his bosom. He could FEEL, for he said that he was tormented. He could TALK, for he asked Abraham to send Lazarus to him. He could REMEMBER, for he remembered his five brethren, his father, and his father's house. He had not lost either consciousness, personality or individuality. It is

therefore clear that consciousness survives the article of death. It is also dear that those who have crossed the line of worlds and have passed into the intermediate state can see, feel, think, hear, talk, remember, enjoy comfort and satisfaction, or, experience thirst and pain. Lazarus enjoyed comfort, ease, rest, and satisfaction while the rich man suffered loss and pain. The intermediate State is thus a state of lively consciousness. To be absent from the body for Lazarus, was to be present with the Lord. Death, to the penitent thief, meant Paradise in the presence of Christ.

To Lazarus, to the penitent thief on the cross and to all those who die in the Lord, death is gain, and not loss. "To die is gain."

To Paul, and to all who are living for Christ, death is gain, and to be with Christ is far better (Phil. 1:21-24).

Therefore, death is not a cessation of existence or an end of being. It is only and simply a cessation of bodily functions and the Separating of the soul from the body, the earth, time and physical senses. Death simply brings to an end one stage of our existence in order that we may enter upon another stage of existence. The soul even now does not sleep when the body does, for we dream, see visions, preach, pray, walk, and talk -- in our sleep, and some of us preach better when we are sleeping than we do when we are awake.

By dreams and visions God has made known His righteous will to men and women while they slept. The soul, then unfettered, is clearer of vision, and, unchained is therefore unhindered in its functions. It is really the soul that sees, feels, hears, talks and remembers, and it can perform these functions better when the body is resting. in sleep. The very use of the word sleep, in connection with the death of a believer in Christ, implies that death is not a cessation of existence.

Before the body of the Christian is cold in death, before the body of a believer is laid away in the cemetery, before the undertaker has been informed, before relatives and friends have been notified, the soul of the saint is already in the arms of the Savior, and in the presence of all other saints and angels in Paradise above.

Death need not be feared for death to the godly is gain. It is a falling asleep and an awakening in a fairer world. To the Christian there is no dark, deep, dangerous river to cross. To the child of God there is no valley of death, no darkness and no hobgoblins, for ministering angels await the moment of the purified believers passing to convey the soul to Paradise above. One of the first exultant experiences of the dying saint will be to meet the guardian angels who have watched over him in his earthly life and who shall escort and guide him HOME. Another exultant experience will be the consciousness that we have left behind us our earthly body with all its possibilities of pain and poverty, weakness and woe, sufferings and sorrows, limitations and losses, and, that we are possessed of a spiritual body, fitted and formed in every way for the spiritual realm in which we are to reside, and await in comfort, happiness and peace, the resurrection morning when we shall also possess a resurrected and glorified body like the resurrected and glorified body of Christ.

Then again, how unspeakably grand and glorious must be the realization that we are being transported upward and ever upward toward a better and brighter and more beautiful abode, and with angels ascending and descending, greeting us and welcoming us HOME.

Breathing an atmosphere of pure love, in a land where God is the Light and holiness is supreme, we shall be supremely happy as well as perfectly holy. Then suddenly to find ourselves in the everlasting embrace of unsullied affection and in the arms of our loving Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and all this within the first twenty-four hours of our dying, surely, to die is gain. To actually see Jesus Christ face to face and to feel that at last we are forever with the Lord, will be heaven enough for me. Then, to meet our loved ones, and all the redeemed of all the ages and be introduced to Abel, Noah, Enoch, Moses Elijah, Daniel and the three Hebrews, John and James, Paul and Peter, Barnabas and Bartholomew, Luther and Wesley, Booth and Bresee and all the happy and holy of Adam's redeemed race will be heaven begun, and ALL before our body is buried. "TO DIE IS GAIN."

The Sting of death was extracted by Christ on the Cross of Calvary and now, thank God, a Christian need not fear death, for death to the believer is a birth into a brighter and more beautiful world. Not only will the intermediate state be a state of consciousness, but it will be a state of undisturbed rest. It will be a place, a state or condition, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.

The souls under the altar, in Revelation 6:9-11, were given white robes for their spotless, spiritual (not yet resurrected) bodies and they were to rest for a season.

Here is not only consciousness but a measure of reward and a season of rest, while the departed soul awaits the coming of Christ and the consequent resurrection of the body. The intermediate state of rest of the disembodied soul will be a rest from all the pains and penalties of racial as well as personal sins, a rest from weariness, worry and woe, a rest from sorrow, suffering and sighing, a rest from temptation and tears, a rest from bereavements and bickerings, a rest from toil and trouble, a rest from all ills and all labor. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord . . . they . . . rest from their labors."

The intermediate state will also be a state of perfect happiness. The word Paradise means, "a garden of delights." "Blessed," or hilariously happy all the time, "are the dead who die in the Lord." To be perfectly happy implies consciousness.

Paradise lost was a garden of glorious delights and pure pleasures and Paradise regained will be a more glorious place and state of unending conscious blessedness and beauty. In such a pure and perfect Paradise the righteous shall await their complete and final redemption, to wit, the redemption of the body (Romans 8:23).

This suggests that the intermediate place called Paradise above is not the final state of the righteous. Death does not usher us immediately to our final heaven and everlasting happy home. The final, happy and holy heaven will be entered after we receive our resurrected bodies, after the coming of Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords.

The return of Christ will be in two stages. He will descend first into the atmospheric heaven with the souls and spirits of the righteous dead from Paradise above. The righteous dead will pick up their resurrected bodies, and all the saints -- resurrected saints and raptured saints -- shall together meet the Lord above the tree tops never more to part.

We Shall then receive our reward for faithful service, holy influence, happy self-denial, joyful sacrifice and Sufferings and then go to the bridal hall where the marriage of God's beloved Son will be performed by God the Father. After the wedding, the holy, happy bride with the holy, happy, handsome Bridegroom shall take up residence in the New Jerusalem. The marriage supper shall be celebrated and then Christ with His bride, church, friends, servants and attendants shall descend to the earth and reign over mankind for 1,000 years.

After the millennial reign of Christ we shall return to the New Jerusalem which will then descend from heaven and the future glorious age of the ages shall begin. Great, grand, and glorious things are ahead for all the children of God.

Full rewards cannot be properly bestowed until after the second coming of Christ because the influence of the believer extends beyond the grave. Abel though dead yet speaketh.

Not only will the intermediate place and state be a place and state of complete consciousness, hilarious happiness, a garden of glories, and a place of perfect rest and peace but it will be a place and state of a blessed and buoyant hope.

Theologians speak of the Church Militant, and the Church Triumphant and by these expressions is meant the church on earth and the church in heaven. The Holy Spirit thinks of it as the whole family in heaven and earth. Part of the family are in heaven or Paradise above and part of it in the earth, fighting the good fight of faith and firmly laying hold of eternal life. ALL are looking for the glorious appearing of Christ-the Blessed Hope. The Saints now in Paradise await the coming of Christ and the glorious resurrection of their bodies while the living believers on earth are looking for the appearing of Christ that they may be caught up, without either passing through death or the intermediate state. The whole family of the redeemed in heaven and on earth, from Abel to the last believer in Christ the Lamb await the second coming of Christ to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords.

* * * * *

"Oh! precious tale of triumph this!
And martyr-blood shed to achieve it,
Of suffering past -- of present bliss,
'IN JESU CHRISTO OBDORMIVIT.'

"Of cherished dead be mine the trust,
Thrice blessed solace to believe it,
That I can utter o'er their dust,
'IN JESU CHRISTO OBDORMIVIT.'

"Now to my loved one's grave I bring
My immortelle and interweave it
With God's own golden lettering,
'IN JESU CHRISTO OBDORMIVIT'."

* * *

I would not live alway -- live alway below!
Oh, no, I'll not linger when bidden to go:
The days of our pilgrimage granted us here
Are enough for life's woes, full enough for its cheer:
Would I shrink from the path which the prophets of God,

Apostles, and martyrs, so joyfully trod?
Like a spirit unblest, o'er the earth would I roam,
While brethren and friends are all hastening home?

* * *

QUESTION:

"How are the dead raised?"

ANSWER:

1. "God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him."
2. "It is raised a spiritual body."
3. "Equal unto the angels."

* * *

"It is a glorious thing to die." -- Hannah Moore (just before she died).

"I have pain -- but I have peace. " -- Richard Baxter (the day before he died).

"I go from this bed to a crown, farewell." -- S. R. Bangs.

"Independence forever." -- John Adams (second President of United States).

"See in what peace a Christian can die." -- Joseph Addison (poet and essayist).

"I die happy." -- Joseph Butler.

"I see the earth receding, heaven opening. God is calling me." -- D. L. Moody (evangelist).

"No mortal can live after the glories which God has manifested to my Soul." -- Toplady
(writer of "Rock of Ages").

"The best of all is, God is with us." -- John Wesley.

* * * * *

Chapter 6 KEYS TO THE FUTURE

Those who preach and teach the false theory of soul sleeping lay much stress upon Old Testament scriptures. They emphasize expressions like Genesis 25:8, "Gathered to his people," as if it meant the grave. Even good, well meaning people have some vague idea that it may mean the grave. The expression, "Gathered to his people," has no reference whatsoever to the grave or family burial place. "Abraham was gathered to his people." Abraham was buried in Palestine, whereas his people were buried in Chaldea.

Moses and Aaron were gathered unto their people but neither was buried in the family burial place or the cemetery, as we would call it. The Lord buried Moses and no one knows of his sepulcher (Deut. 34:1-6). Being "gathered to his fathers" and "gathered to their fathers" has nothing whatever to do with a burial ground, mausoleum, or cave of Machpelah.

On the cross of Calvary our Lord Jesus Christ commended His spirit to God and His body afterwards was taken down from the cross and buried.

Neither Christ nor saints sleep but only the body of Christ and the bodies of the saints.

In Acts 13:36 it says that "David fell on sleep and saw corruption." This scripture explains itself. "Fell on sleep" and "corruption" refer to the body only.

"The transfiguration of Christ was undoubtedly intended to convey to us a faint idea concerning the glorious state of our resurrected and glorified body.

"We shall be like Him."

Christ was transfigured before the wondering disciples and "his face did shine as the sun" (and we shall be like Him), "and his raiment was white as the light" (and we shall be like Him). Transcendentally glorious must have been the body of our Lord, and "we shall be like him."

Such meditations as this pour a heavenly radiance on the dark and dismal tomb and enable us to smile amid the storms of life. Such truths also prepare us for triumph in the oncoming moment of dissolution and death.

The felicity awaiting the sons of God beyond the boundaries of time must far exceed our most exalted conception. Who can fathom the meaning of those wonderful words of inspired wisdom, "We shall be like him," penned by the loving John (1 John 3:2).

These are not sentimental guesses. Lazarus felt himself the same Lazarus that he was before he died. Standing on the other side of the grave, Jesus said, "Handle me and see . . . it is I, myself." There was no break in memory, remembrance or recognition.

That death does not separate the saint from the Savior is clearly taught by Paul.

"Neither death . . . nor height . . . nor any creature is able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus."

"Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wings,
Thy better portion trace,
Rise from transitory things,
Towards heaven, thy native place."

* * * * *

I would not live alway -- no, welcome the tomb!
Since Jesus hath lain there, I dread not its gloom;
Where He deigned to sleep, I'll too bow my head,
All peaceful to slumber on that hallowed bed.
Then the glorious daybreak, to follow that night,
The orient gleam of the angels of light,
With their clarion call for the sleepers to rise
And chant forth their matins, away to the skies.

Who, who would live alway -- away from his God,
Away from yon heaven, that blissful abode
Where the rivers of pleasure flow o'er the bright plains,
And the noontide of glory eternally reigns;
Where the saints of all ages in harmony meet,
Their Savior and brethren transported to greet,
While the songs of salvation exultantly roll,
And the smile of the Lord is the feast of the soul!

* * *

Beyond these chilling winds and gloomy skies,
Beyond Death's cloudy portal
There is a land where beauty never dies,
And love becomes immortal.

A land whose light is never dimmed by shade,

Whose fields are ever vernal,
Where nothing beautiful can ever fade,
But blooms for aye eternal.

* * *

I believe in the brevity of death and in the endlessness of life. -- Hugh Elmer Brown.

I believe in a personal and conscious immortality of the soul. I am just as sure of my existence after that change that we call death as I am sure that I exist today after the sleep of last night. Thus, I view death as a great and glorious adventure. I view death as a divine promotion. -- Daniel L. Marsh.

I am so made that I cry out in pain when you tell me that men like Saul of Tarsus and Francis of Assisi were brightly colored bubbles which burst when death pricked them. -- Charles Edward Jefferson.

Who can believe that one moment after death Jesus and Judas were equal -- both nothing?

I believe in immortality because Jesus taught it and believed it. That is all the proof I need. -- Charles M. Sheldon.

* * * * *

Chapter 7 GOOD MORNING

Immortality is one of the many fascinating words of the Bible. It is a word which has helped the heart of humanity from the beginning of time. It has been a thrilling theme dealt with by poet, priest, preacher and prophet. The idea, the dream, the hope, the faith of a life beyond the grave is deeply rooted in the soil of humanity.

The soul of man is bigger than either time or space. It talks by wireless telephone from the fortieth story of a New York hotel to another soul on a ship in the midst of the Pacific Ocean. A great air clipper now covers in a few hours distances that once took months to travel.

The writer was born and reared within a few miles of the ocean. More times than he can remember he has seen large ships leave the river and head out to sea and then listened to the words, "There, she's gone."

Gone. Gone where? Gone from me. Gone from my immediate presence. Gone from my sight. That's all. Within a very little time someone on the other side of the ocean would be saying, "Here she comes."

She's gone. She comes. He's gone. He comes. That's death to the Christian. Not an end, but a beginning.

The Carpenter of Nazareth proved beyond quibble or question that putting off the body was not an end but a beginning.

He proved that the tomb was an open thoroughfare and not a blind alley.

He proved that death to a God-fearing man is a voyage home and not a journey into an unknown land.

He proved that death is the gateway to our Father's house and not a passage into a strange country.

He proved that life cannot be destroyed in the sense of extinction or annihilation. There is no such thing as extinction or annihilation of anything, anywhere.

The Century of Progress Exposition was opened by light from the star Arcturus. That beam of light left Arcturus forty light years before. It was caught by our astronomers as it reached our planet and it was used to throw the master switch at the great exhibition.

There is not anything, at any time, ever destroyed in the sense of annihilation or extinction. The form may be changed but not annihilated. Our bodies are changing all the time. The body which I now possess is nothing like the body which was mine twenty years ago. The average man and woman has already put off many bodies and yet lives for the soul is endless.

Ice may become water and water invisible vapor but it is not annihilated. Fire may consume a building but the elements pass into another form without loss.

"God is not the God of the dead but of the living," is proof positive that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were not dead in the sense of extinction, annihilation or unconsciousness.

The testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ, the only One who knows, is decisive and the question is eternally settled.

Say not then "Good night" or "Good-bye" as though it were forever but in some brighter clime bid me "Good morning."

* * * * *

So flits the world's uncertain span!
Nor zeal for God, nor love for man,
Gives mortal monuments a date
Beyond the power of Time and Fate.
The towers must share the builder's doom;
Ruin is theirs, and his a tomb;
But better boon benignant heaven
To Faith and Charity has given,

And bids the Christian hope sublime
Transcend the bounds of Fate and Time.

-- Sir Walter Scott --

* * *

I love to think of heaven, it seems not far away,
Its crystal streams refresh me as I near the closing day;
Its balmy winds are wafted from the heavenly hills above,
And they fold me in an atmosphere of purity and love.

* * *

The Greatest Of All Facts -- Jesus Christ was and is the Eternal Son of God.

The Greatest of All Fears -- The fear of death.

The Greatest of All Hopes -- The hope of immortality.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ proved Him to be the Eternal Son of God.

The resurrection of Christ pronounced the death of death, conquered the fear of death, and extracted the sting of death.

The resurrection of Christ assures the immortality of the soul.

* * *

The literal bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ is the Corner Stone of Christianity, the Foundation Stone of Christian doctrine, the Gibraltar of Christian evidence, and the Waterloo of infidelity and worldly wisdom. -- W.G.H.

* * * * *

Chapter 8 RESURRECTION AND RECOGNITION

The hope that is within us causes us to ponder on the condition of the converted and sanctified soul after the resurrection of the body and after the judgment seat of Christ.

Nature speaks another language besides the language of death and the grave-the language of the resurrection and life.

Flowers may fade and leaves may fall and snow may wrap its white shroud over all the earth, but nature has its spring as well as its winter, its Easter Sunday as well as its Good Friday.

Both nature and religion celebrate an Easter for the chill death of winter gives way to a life which is colorful, buoyant and beautiful.

Fields and flowers, woods and herbs arise every year from the grave and prophesy the same prospect for the human body. The grain of wheat cast into the ground, decays, dies and goes back to dust, only to arise from its grave with sometimes a thirty, sixty, and even one hundred fold increase.

The tiny grain of wheat promises a like resurrection for its far surpassing kin, the human body. The acorn becomes the oak, the caterpillar becomes the butterfly, the dirty, ugly bulb becomes the lovely lily, for nature as well as religion, promises, prophesies and performs her feats of resurrection life and beauty. Death is not the end.

Death and burial and a dosed grave are not the grand FINALE of human existence. The great and final end of earthly life is, praise God, an opened grave and a resurrected life eternal in our Father's house.

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ plainly taught a resurrection of the body from the grave:

"All that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth" (John 5:28, 29).

"There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just [regenerated] and of the unjust [unregenerate]" (Acts 24:15).

"As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:22).

In this epistle to the Corinthians, chapter fifteen, Paul is dealing with the body and not with the soul or the spirit.

All who sleep in Jesus shall be resurrected from the grave at the coming of Christ. The resurrected body of believers will be a glorified, immaterial, immortal, glorious body. Glorified saints with glorified bodies will have power to change from the invisible to the visible form at will.

Glorified believers with glorified bodies will be able to go anywhere, at any time, and to any place without passing through doors or other entrances for believers are to enjoy a body like unto Christ's glorious body.

The body of believers will be an incorruptible body. It will be raised in incorruption and will be a glorious, powerful, immortal, spiritual body (1 Cor. 15:15, 42-44), neither subject to time, matter nor space.

The resurrected body of the believer will be endowed with capacity to change itself at will, and become invisible or visible at pleasure. All angelic beings possess this power of transformation and we shall be "as the angels." All the normal faculties of man will be glorified. The glorified EYE will suddenly become telescopic and microscopic. Its possible range and

power baffles description. The glorified EAR of the glorified believer will be microphonic and telephonic and the sweet symphonies of the Christ conducted orchestras will reach the saint from the farthest limits of the universes of God.

* * * * *

Take the pillows from the cradle
Where the little sufferer lay;
Draw the curtain, close the shutters,
Shut out every beam of day.

Spread the pail upon the table,
Place the lifeless body there;
Back from off the marble features
Lay the auburn curls with care.

With its little blue-veined fingers
Crossed upon its sinless breast,
Free from care, and pain, and anguish,
Let the infant cherub rest.

Smooth its little shroud about it;
Pick the toys from off the floor;
They, with all their sparkling beauty
Ne'er can charm their owners more.

Take the little shoes and stockings
From the doting mother's sight;
Pattering feet no more will need them,
Walking in the fields of light.

Parents, faint and worn with watching
Through the long, dark night of grief,
Dry your tears and soothe your sighing
Gain a respite of relief.

Mother, care is no more needed
To allay the rising moan,
And though you perchance may leave it,
It can never be alone.

Angels bright will watch beside it
In its quiet, holy slumber
Till the morning, then awake it
To a place among their number

Thus a golden link is broken
In the chain of earthy bliss,
Thus the distance shorter making
'Twixt the brighter world and this.

* * *

This encourageth all drooping spirits; this sustaineth all fainting hearts; this sweeteneth all present miseries; this lighteneth all heavy burdens; this encourageth in all dangers; this supporteth in all calamities. -- Pearson, On The Creed.

* * * * *

Chapter 9 HEAVEN -- WHAT? WHERE? WHEN? HOW? WHY?

The inscription on the tomb of George Washington, the courageous father of our country is, "I am the resurrection and the life."

Over the caskets of George and Martha Washington there is inscribed the words, "I am the resurrection and the life."

Written on the Washington Monument are the words: "George Washington, a sincere Christian . . . in the righteousness of Jesus Christ."

The United States of America was founded and built on, and can endure only as she believes in, THE CHRIST, who is the resurrection and the life.

Death is only the destruction of our animal and material existence, the separation of the saved soul and sanctified spirit from the corruptible body of day.

Death is only and simply another crisis in the history of the people of God.

Justification, or the initial saving crisis is a partial salvation. Entire sanctification or the second saving crisis is complete present salvation from all Sin.

Glorification, the last saving crisis is final salvation of spirit, soul and body forever.

The writer has settled it deep down in his soul to

"Watch and fight and pray
The battle ne'er give o'er
Renew it boldly every day,
And help divine implore."

He urges the reader also:

"My soul be on thy guard,
Ten thousand foes arise,
The hosts of hell are pressing hard
To keep thee from the skies."

The Bible teaches that the faithful follower of Christ passes from earth at death to a place of comfort, blessedness, peace and purity. The sanctified soul is immediately at home, and, at home with Christ his loving Savior and Lord.

Not only does the Bible teach that the Christian is happy and peaceful in dying, and immediately after death and that he is at home with Christ, but that he is at home with his family and friends and loved ones who died in the Lord. The Old Testament chroniclers use a curiously consistent formula in speaking of the death of saints. It says, "He died . . . and was gathered unto his people." There are two good reasons why this expression does NOT mean the grave, the cemetery, or the family burying place.

1. Abraham, Moses, Miriam and Aaron were not interred in the family burying place.

Abraham was buried in Canaan and not in Ur of the Chaldees.

Moses was buried on the top of a mountain and no one knows his sepulcher to this day.

Miriam, the sister of Moses, was buried in the desert far behind.

Aaron, the brother of Moses and Miriam, was buried on the slopes of Mount Hor. Their wise little mother died in Egypt and yet the phrase, "gathered to his people," was used in the case of all the men above mentioned.

2. The expression, "was gathered to his people," comes between the dying and the burial. The burial is mentioned later.

The expression, "gathered to his people," has reference to the soul and not to the body or burial of the saints.

We shall be with Christ and with our redeemed family and friends at home and that forever.

That we shall recognize Christ and each other is clearly revealed in the Word of God.

Lazarus certainly knew the rich man at whose gate he once begged for bread. The once rich man certainly knew Lazarus and Abraham notwithstanding the fact that he was both dead and buried.

The penitent thief on the cross received much more than he asked.

"Lord, remember me."

"Today thou shalt be with me."

Thank God! Not only remembered by Christ but before sundown he was to be with Christ and with Him in Paradise.

Saul recognized Samuel and our Lord's disciples recognized Moses and Elias. Heaven is the glad finale of the believers' history. The path of pain ends in the pleasures and pursuits of God's unending home.

No more sorrow and no more sighing. No more dying and no more death. No more mourning and no more misery. No more crying and no more curse.

"The former things are passed away."

* * * * *

Go, wing thy flight from star to star,
From world to luminous world, as far
As the universe spreads its flaming wall;
Take all the pleasures of all the spheres,
And multiply each through endless years,
One minute of heaven is worth them all.

* * *

Oh! Paradise must show more fair
Than any earthly ground,
And therefore longs my spirit there
Right quickly to be found.

In Paradise a stream must flow
Of everlasting love:
Each tear of longing shed below
Therein a pearl will prove.

* * *

"I would not have you ignorant brethren concerning them that are asleep."

"My father which is in HEAVEN" (Matt. 10:32).

"Thou shalt have treasure in HEAVEN" (Matt. 19:21).

"Your names are written in HEAVEN" (Luke 10:20).

"He being full of the Holy Ghost looked UP into HEAVEN" (Acts 7:55).

"Ye have in HEAVEN a better possession" (Heb. 10:34).

"An inheritance . . . reserved in HEAVEN for you" (1 Pet. 1:4).

"Jesus lifted UP his eyes to HEAVEN" (John 17:1).

"God went UP from Abraham."

"The Son of man came DOWN from HEAVEN."

"Christ went UP into heaven."

"Let not God regard it from ABOVE."

"Who shall go UP for us to heaven."

"If my people... shall humble themselves . then will I hear from HEAVEN."

* * * * *

Chapter 10 HEAVEN (Continued)

Heaven is neither a myth, a mirage nor a madman's dream. -- W.G.H.

Heaven is a state, a condition, and a place. "I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:1, 2).

Abraham looked for a city whose builder, architect, maker and beautifier was God.

"Here," says the apostle Paul, "we have no continuing city [no permanent, settled, abiding place], but we seek one to come" (Heb. 11:10, 13:14).

The Holy Bible speaks of three heavens.

1. The Atmospheric Heavens.

"God gave you rain from heaven" (Acts 14:17). The heaven here refers to the atmosphere in which we live, breathe and move. Such heaven is around us, under us and above us. Such heaven extends some forty to four hundred miles above the tree tops. Man walks upon the earth at the bottom of an ocean of air, as fish swim in the lake or ocean of water. Such air or atmosphere is the first heaven.

It was from this heaven that Lucifer fell like lightning to the earth. Sin has never been in God's heavenly home. Neither sin nor Satan has ever been in the home of God. "The war in heaven" to which reference is made in the book of Revelation is yet future, and is to take place in the heaven of the atmosphere above the tree tops. There has never been and never can be either sin, Satan ' or strife in God's happy and holy home (see my book, "Riches from Revelation").

2. The Starry Heavens.

The space occupied by the heaven of the stars stirs the imagination but baffles description.

Millions of flaming suns, multiplied thousands of light bearing moons and uncountable hosts of scintillating stars compose the starry heavens above.

3. The Home of God.

Heaven is the home of our gracious God. All who are born of the Holy Spirit and who walk in the light are members of the family of God and heaven is the happy home of the family of God.

Heaven is the holy home, the delightful and peaceful place in which God and the family of God shall dwell forever. It was to this heaven that the Apostle Paul was caught up, after having been stoned and left for dead. Since the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, all believers who die in the Lord are escorted by holy angels to the Paradise section or suburb of heaven to await the resurrection of the body.

Heaven is our Father's HOUSE (stability and permanency) in which are many MANSIONS (regal, royal, Spacious and secure homes), the eternal HOME (peace, comfort, rest and happiness) of all the justified, holy and obedient children of God. We need not fear death, for death will open to us the door to a happy and holy eternal habitation.

* * * * *

"The rougher the way, the shorter the stay;
The tempests that rise, shall gloriously
Hurry our souls to the skies."

* * *

'Tis a blessing to live, but a greater to die;
And the best of the world, is its path to the sky.

* * *

"Look DOWN from thy holy habitation, from HEAVEN" (Deut. 26:15).

"Their prayer came UP to his holy dwelling place even unto HEAVEN" (2 Chron. 30:27).

"The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in HEAVEN" (Psa. 11:4).

"Who shall ASCEND into the hill of the Lord? He that hath clean hands [holiness without] and a pure heart [holiness within J" (Psa. 24:3).

"He hath looked DOWN... from HEAVEN" (Psa. 102:19).

"God is in HEAVEN" (Eccl. 5:2).

"Swear not at all; neither by HEAVEN; for it is God's throne" (Matt. 5:34).

"Lay UP treasures . . . in HEAVEN" (Matt. 6:20).

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Chapter 11 HEAVEN (Continued)

Heaven is called a house. This implies residence, the residence of a family. It shall be a house that cannot be shaken, and which shall never decay. Part of the family have already moved into it. The other members of the happy family are on the way and will soon arrive.

Heaven is called a city. This implies security, safety and stability. Abraham, the friend of God and father of the faithful looked for a city whose builder is God. Here we dwell in tents and have no continuing city but we seek one to come. It will be an eternal city filled with happy immortal inhabitants.

Heaven is called a Paradise. This word means a garden of pleasure. At God's right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

Heaven, the home of God and the home of all His happy and holy family, is at the end of the highway of God and the way of holiness.

As the oak is the resurrection of the acorn, as the lily is the resurrection of the uncomely little bulb that decayed in the dirt and as the butterfly is the resurrection of the caterpillar, so is the resurrection of the righteous dead. Sown in corruption and weakness it is raised in incorruption, power and glory. Sown a natural body it is raised a spiritual body, like the glorious body of our blessed Lord. Heaven is not only a temper of the soul, a condition of character fixed in the faithful follower of the Christ, it is a place of peace, purity, plenty, power, gladness, grandeur and glory in the presence of a good and gracious God.

Heaven is a place of unspeakable grandeur and glory. Heaven is a place of supreme happiness as well as a state of perfect holiness.

"I go to prepare a place for you... where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3).

Delivered from all the evils of this present life, -- from mental feebleness and imbecilities, -- from the society of the wicked, the presence of sin and Satan, -- from the temptations of the evil one, and from the trials of earthly probation, we shall be at HOME with a loving God and His glorified Son, our Savior.

God shall wipe away all tears, and eternal youth, blooming and abundant health and eternal springtime shall be our forever.

Heaven is a place of everlasting joy and an eternal weight of glory. It is a place of unending incorruption. It is an abode of everlasting pleasures and fullness of joy for in God's presence is "fulness of joy," and at His right hand there are "pleasures for evermore."

* * * * *

Be strong!
We are not here to play, to dream, to drift;
We have hard work to do, and loads to lift.
Shun not the struggle; face it.
'Tis God's gift.

Be strong!
Say not the days are evil -- Who's to blame?
And fold the hands and acquiesce -- O shame!
Stand up, and speak out, and bravely,
In God's name.

Be strong!
It matters not how deep entrenched the wrong,
How hard the battle goes, the day how long,
Faint not, fight on!

Tomorrow comes the song.

* * *

"He who hath helped thee hitherto
Will help thee all thy journey through."

* * *

Here is the inspired penman's idea of heaven:

"We shall be like Him."

"We shall see Him."

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Chapter 12

HEAVEN IS TO BE OUR HOME

HOME. The word stirs the soul. HOME. The word quickens the pulse. HOME. The word warms the heart, calls back the wanderer, and imparts endurance to the tired and worn-down sons of toil. The word H-o-m-e, sustains the sailor on the storm tossed seas, and the very memory of home is a seven fold shield against vice and nameless sin. HEAVEN is our HOME. Heaven is our Father's house, the home of purity and peace.

"There is a land of pure delight
Where saints immortal reign
Infinite day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain."

Now we see through a glass darkly. We shall see, dearly, fully, "face to face."

To see Christ will be heaven. To behold HIM, in the fulness of His unveiled glory and grandeur will be a perennial source of celestial pleasure. The sufferings and sorrows of this present life will dwindle into insignificance and nothingness after one moment in the presence of Him in whom dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead.

"Here in the body pent,
Absent from him I roam,
Yet nightly pitch my moving tent,
One day's march nearer HOME."

HEAVEN. A place of peace without molestation, purity and plenty without want, holiness and health without danger of sickness, delightful days without a night, pleasures forever without possibility of pain and fulness of life, love and liberty in the presence of our loving Lord.

HEAVEN. The place where hearts swell with rapture without remorse, where the soul will heave and sing with satisfaction without a sigh, where our wondering eyes shall be charmed with visions but never weep.

HEAVEN. The place in which our hands shall be enriched with palms of victory but shall never tremble and our heads shall be encircled with an exceeding weight of glory but shall never ache.

HEAVEN. Where rainbows never fade, suns never set, babies never cry and mothers never die.

HEAVEN. The place without wearisome days and sorrowful nights, no hunger or thirst, no anxiety or fear, the place of joy without jealousies, friendships without farewells, without sad separations and without a single sorrow or sigh.

HEAVEN. After the fever of life and labor, after weariness, want and woe, after fightings and fears, fretfulness and failures, after struggling and succeeding, after chance and change, at length the vision of God and home.

HEAVEN. No aching hearts, no tear dimmed eye, no form wasted by sickness, no cheek grown pale through penury or care.

HEAVEN. Our Father's land and fatherland, the place of perpetual calm, beauty and blessedness, an everlasting tranquillity and satisfaction supreme.

HEAVEN. The glorious and happy HOME of God and habitation eternal of the holy people of God.

HEAVEN. The eternal abode of the saints, saved from sin and all evil, delivered from all ignorance, despair, debt, dirt and the devil.

HEAVEN. The place and state where weariness, want and woe; toil, tests and trials; affliction, sickness, sorrow and sighing; death, disappointment and disgrace, are unknown.

HEAVEN. The home of the redeemed sons of God who shall enjoy forever the friendly associations of an innumerable company of angels (Heb. 12:23), and the society of all the pure and pious of all the ages and out of all the countries of the globe (Matt. 8:11).

HEAVEN. The dwelling place of the justified, sanctified and joyful children of God who shall meet and mingle with redeemed loved ones, loved long since and lost awhile (1 Cor. 13:12).

HEAVEN. The eternal Paradise of Perfection where our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ shall be the center and attraction of holy angels and the redeemed of all the ages, for we shall see Him AS HE IS. We shall behold Him and feast on Him (John 17:17-20).

Amid pleasures for evermore we shall behold the unfolding perfections, beauty and blessedness of Him, "Who is above all, God blessed forever."

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THE END