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**BEYOND THE VEIL**  
**By Mary Sparkes Wheeler**

Titled, Compiled and Edited  
By Duane V. Maxey  
From the Book:  
"As It Is In Heaven"  
By Mary Sparkes Wheeler  
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Digital Edition 08/11/2003  
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**INTRODUCTION TO THIS DIGITAL PUBLICATION**

Mary Sparkes Wheeler was one of S. Olin Garrison's "Holiness Witnesses" in his book of holiness testimonies titled "Forty Witnesses," and, recently, HDM has published a holiness book

titled "Consecration And Purity" ( hdm2281) by Mary Sparkes Wheeler. Therefore, when I later found her book "As It Is In Heaven" available for purchase, I bought it. However, after browsing through the volume and examining its contents, I have decided not to publish the whole of it, but rather to publish from it only some selected excerpts.

Why this decision? -- not because its contents have caused me to doubt the writer's Christian experience, and not because I doubt the author's sincere desire to bless the saints of God with descriptions of how "It Is In Heaven" -- but because I think that she has written too much based upon the speculations of her sanctified, but finite, mind which cannot be verified by the Bible. For example, in Chapter 6 she states:

"This heaven... is intended for the inhabitants of our entire planetary system. All of the worlds revolving around our sun are created for habitations; and as each becomes fitted to sustain life upon its surface, God covers it with vegetable life, and peoples it with animated, sentient, intelligent beings. But these things our heavenly Father leaves for us to find out for ourselves, by study and research."

Wheeler writes these speculations from the perspective of one who is already in heaven conversing with another heavenly inhabitant, and she continues:

"Some of these planets, as we learned on earth, are much larger than our own world, and far exceed it in beauty and glory. Jupiter is as you know, fourteen times larger, and journeys around the sun bearing millions of inhabitants. Then we have Saturn, with its belts like an eternal rainbow, on which the rays of light produce indescribably brilliant effects. The inhabitants from these beautiful worlds are constantly coming to us, joining our circle, and you see heaven is large enough to take them all in...

"But are they like us in their own worlds? Do they dwell in human form?"

"Yes, with certain difference," our heavenly Father adapts their forms to the varied conditions of the worlds they inhabit. They all pass through the change which we call death. Change and decay come to all forms of life, but when they drop their material bodies, and take on the spiritual, then we are one in spirit for conditions in all spiritual life are alike."

"This is new to me," I said. "I always thought of heaven as for our world alone."

"Yes, and when we were children we thought of our earth as the only world in which intelligent beings lived, and conceived of God's care as confined to our world only. But as we increased in years, we learned more about the stars. We discovered that while God arranged and placed them so as to give light to us, they were themselves, multitudes of them, larger than our earth."

I was disappointed in finding the above in Wheeler's "As It Is In Heaven," for these statements in the imagined heavenly conversation are based solely upon speculation, and have no Biblical verification. Isaiah 45:18 tells us that the Lord "created the heavens; GOD himself that FORMED THE EARTH and made it... he formed it TO BE INHABITED..." While the Bible is

clear that God created the earth "to be inhabited," there is nothing in God's Word to verify the assertion or assumption that God has created any other habitation in His universe for any other race of intelligent, accountable creatures, from which other redeemed, tested, and victorious recipients of His grace shall also ascend into Heaven.

Furthermore, not only is there but ONE SAVIOR, the Bible tells us that He died ONLY ONCE! -- "For in that he died, he died unto sin ONCE..." (Romans 6:10). Christ came to EARTH and HERE IT WAS that HE ONCE DIED. Therefore, if there are other worlds with other accountable creatures who also needed redemption, are we to assume that Christ's death ON EARTH was for them also? Wheeler's speculations and the whole scenario involved in them strike me as both unscriptural and illogical!

I think it most likely that THE EARTH was the scene of Christ's -- One and Only -- Sacrificial Death because THE EARTH IS THE ONLY PLANET INHABITED BY CREATURES WHO NEEDED REDEMPTION, and the earth is the only place in the universe that is inhabited by accountable creatures now under Divine Probation.

Acts 17:26 tells us that the Creator "made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation." Today, in their highminded space exploration, men are going beyond "the bounds of their habitation" -- going beyond WHERE God ordained that they live during Time.

In her book "As It Is In Heaven" I feel that Wheeler has gone beyond the bounds of WHAT God has set forth in His Word about where His accountable, probationary creatures now reside. There are some good, Scriptural thoughts in the book, but I think it would have been more edifying if some of her speculations had been omitted from its 404 pages.

Twice, the apostle Paul held up this measuring stick: "WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?" (Romans 4:3; Galatians 4:30). Another measuring stick is its opposite: "What saith NOT the Scripture?" If the Bible is silent on the matter, sometimes it is best not to venture our own opinions or assumptions on the subject.

Mary Sparkes Wheeler wrote her book as if she was one who was already in heaven. She has now gone "beyond the veil" and I have no reason to doubt that she shall forever experience "as it" really "is in heaven, no matter how mistaken some of her thoughts were about its realities. But, though the fullness of its genuine blessedness be hers to enjoy forever, I think it best that her thoughts in "As It Is In Heaven" be abridged to no more than some excerpts therefrom.

Having said all of this, I will only add that you WILL FIND some tender, true, and moving thoughts in the following excerpts from the book. -- DVM

\* \* \* \* \*

01 -- THE EVERLASTING ARMS

[Bear in mind when reading the story below, that Mary Sparkes Wheeler writes as one already in heaven. In this piece, she tells of a meeting in heaven with John B\_\_\_\_, a former acquaintance in her college days on earth who had married her cousin Estelle. The excerpt is Chapter 16 in the book. -- DVM]

One of my earlier and most delightful meetings in the new world was with B\_\_\_\_, a friend of my youthful days and a classmate in college. He had been the leader of the college glee club [a singing ensemble], where his magnetic leadership, his knowledge of music and his powerful and melodious voice, had made him invaluable.

He had not changed, it seemed, one whit from the time when I had so often seen him standing in chapel, before the hundreds of students, his black hair shading his broad open brow, his cheeks ruddy with the bloom of health, and his dark lustrous eyes sparkling with animation as he led the choir. He had been during the four years of our college life an intimate friend and counselor and in his after life had been brought still nearer through his marriage to my cousin, Estelle, who came, while we were students, to teach music in the institution.

She was young, only twenty-two years of age, and remarkably beautiful. She was a blond, with wavy golden hair. She was a devoted Christian, and a charming singer.

The first day she appeared before the students, she was dressed in a simple white muslin gown and a pale pink rose with its long stem and cluster of leaves, lay on her bosom. She was the object of general interest, and, I thought of admiration also.

I was not mistaken in the admiration she aroused in one face especially -- that of B\_\_\_\_. It was her part to play the organ for Chapel services, and whenever she was appointed to sing a solo, she captured the students completely.

"Will you introduce me to your cousin?" my friend asked me one morning. "She seems a lovely character, and she is a rare singer."

I found Estelle more than glad to know him, for she, also, had not been unobservant of the different persons she saw in College. She was pleased, not only with his brilliant, prepossessing appearance, his keen intellect, his strong leadership, but also with the purity of soul which seemed to shine out, and surround him like a halo of light.

"Cousin," she said to me one day, "John B\_\_\_\_ is not only one of Nature's noblemen, but grace has purified his heart. He is in harmony with God, and his life is consecrated to His service. That is the kind of friend I like best. What would you think if some day we should become more than friends?" she asked smiling, as a blush mantled her cheek.

"Nothing would please me better, my dear cousin," I answered. "There is no one in college whom I more thoroughly admire."

As time rolled on it was plainly to be seen that they were deeply interested in each other. He graduated with high honors; taking a position as instructor in astronomy in one of our principal

colleges. Estelle resigned her position as teacher of music, to the regret of those whom she taught, and soon they were married. It was a brilliant and beautiful wedding. All present predicted long years of happiness and usefulness for them.

Their home was an ideal one. It seemed there, as if Edenic purity and joy had been again restored to earth. But, alas for earthly bliss. The inhabitants of earth say: "Death loves a shining mark." But it was more true to say that Life -- immortal life -- loves a shining mark. Some mature early for their heavenly home, and are fully prepared to enter upon celestial services; and these the Master takes because He hath need of them.

A few months after their marriage a fire broke out in the dwelling next to theirs. Estelle, alarmed for the safety of the inmates who were her personal friends, rushed with her husband to their rescue without sufficient clothing to protect them from the bitter cold of the winter's night. She took the parents and their children to her home where they were tenderly cared for; she and her husband trying to outdo each other in ministering to their comfort, and in striving to make amends for the unfortunate occurrence. But in the exposure of the night my cousin contracted a cold, which soon developed into consumption.

Day after day her husband saw her fading before his eyes. Despite every effort to relieve her, despite the remedies of skillful physicians, and the tender loving care with which she was surrounded, the disease would have its way. The hollow cough, the hectic flush upon the beautiful cheek, told the tale of anguish to my disconsolate friend. Day and night he watched beside her, and could not be persuaded to leave her.

She never lost her cheerfulness but smiled upon him, and tried to encourage him. When he seemed more depressed than usual, she would smile more sweetly and quote:

"Cheer up, O soul, thou canst not die;  
Why fearest thou the morrow?  
Beyond the things of time and sense,  
Beyond this world of sorrow,  
All goodness waits to crown thee,  
All love is ever round thee,  
No pain can ever wound thee,  
For love and life are one."

"Darling," she would say, "our love can never die. My love for you will live on eternally. I [shall] fall asleep and waken with the same love burning in my soul for you; and the sleep of the grave cannot destroy this love." But she would add smiling, "the soul never sleeps; never loses consciousness, but lives on, and loves on, and on and on."

One day she said to him, "Raise me up, dearest."

He lifted her in his arms, and held her close to his bosom.

"I can breathe better now," she said.

Laying his cheek against her brow, he felt the cold dew of death upon it, and sobbed in anguish.

"O, my darling, how can I let you go?" She smiled and repeated, "Cheer up, O soul, thou..." But she could go no farther. Then summoning all her remaining strength she looked into his face with celestial tenderness and said: "The eternal God is my refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms," and she was gone. God had taken her to Himself.

My friend bore the crushing blow with heroism. He wrote me freely concerning the matter, for he knew I sympathized deeply with him. I, too, had sustained a great loss in my cousin whom I dearly loved, and I loved him also, so that the destroyer of his home brought a double desolation to my own heart.

[While we were on earth at the time of his loss] He looked to me for comfort and consolation. We talked together, we prayed together. In trying to bind up his broken heart, my own heart was strengthened and made joyful in the Lord, for the same precious promises applied to both, and supplied all our need. But in the freshness and fullness of his grief he could not wholly grasp the promises.

"Cousin," he said one day, "I used to think God's promises were adamant under my feet; that heaven and earth might pass away before they should fail me. Always though I could not understand all his dealings with me, I could say: 'Oh the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God: how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out.' I could sing:--

I do not need to know  
The wherefore, and the whys,  
Of all the seeming ills  
That in my pathway lies.  
If God knows why,  
And wills that it should be,  
That is enough for me."

"But now," he continued, "this is not so clear. O that I could feel assured again in my inmost soul, that God is love."

Duty drew us apart. We did not see one another on earth again, for his life was short. I knew that he had found peace, but what had been his experience, what had soothed his sorrow, and removed his fears, and made him victorious in the "valley of the shadow" I had never heard. This was the thing I now, meeting him in this heavenly world, longed most to know. After a delightful interview with him, in which we conversed freely about earthly and heavenly things I said:

"B\_\_\_\_, in the last conversation we had together on earth, you told me that your faith seemed a little clouded. You wanted to feel assured of God's love for you. How did you get the victory?"

"After my beautiful home nest had been despoiled -- broken up --" he replied, "I read an article in Nature's Studies, and Nature's works are always God's works that greatly encouraged and helped me.

"This author watched an eagle as she built her nest, and when the eggs were laid and hatched, he watched her as she fed the nestlings, and continued to watch until they were sufficiently developed to try their wings, and he saw the mother bird thrust them from the nest, and teach them to fly, he said:

"Presently the mother eagle came swiftly up from the valley, and there was food in her talons. She came to the edge of the nest, hovered over it a moment, so as to give the hungry eaglet a sight and smell of food, then went slowly down the valley, taking the food with her, telling the little one in her own way to come and he should have it.

"He called after her loudly from the edge of the nest, and spread his wings a dozen times to follow; but the plunge was too awful; his heart failed him, and he settled back in the nest. In a little while she came back again, this time without food, and hovered over the nest, trying every way to induce the little one to leave it.

"She succeeded at last, when with a desperate effort he sprang upward and flapped to the ledge above. Then after surveying the world gravely from his new place he flapped back to the nest, suddenly, as if discouraged. The mother eagle rose well above him. The little fellow then stood on the edge of the nest looking down at the plunge he dared not take. There was a sharp cry from behind, and the next instant the mother eagle had swooped, striking the nest at his feet, sending his support of twigs and himself with them out into the air together.

"He was afloat now, and flapping lustily for life. Over him, under him, beside him, hovered the mother on tireless wings, calling softly that she was there. But the awful fear of the depths was upon the little one. His flapping grew more wild, he fell faster, and soon he folded his wings as if expecting to be dashed to pieces among the lance tops of the spruces.

"Then like a flash the old mother eagle shot under him; his despairing feet touched her broad shoulders between her wings. He righted himself, rested for a moment, found his head, then she dropped like a shot from under him, leaving him to come down on his own wings. A handful of feathers torn out by his claws hovered slowly down after them. In an instant I lost them among the trees, but when I found them again with my glass the eaglet was in the top of the great pine, and the mother was feeding him.

"And then standing there alone in the great wilderness, it flashed upon me for the first time just what the wise old prophet meant when he wrote: 'As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him.'

"So I saw that my dear one had plumed her wings for a higher flight; and what seemed a plunge into death and despair was only God stirring up the nest to teach us to mount nearer to Him:

and then I saw as never before the true meaning of my darling's last words to me: 'Underneath are the everlasting arms.' "

It has taken some time for me to convey to you in words this experience and incident; but as I stood looking with peculiar interest into the face of my friend, it all flashed upon my mind in what seemed to be a "little moment" of time.

"You seem to be in a reverie," my friend said, "but O, I am unspeakably glad to find you here."

Without referring to the earthly side I replied, "Our meeting affords mutual pleasure. I am delighted to see you. But where is my cousin Estelle? I want to see her also?"

"You shall see and hear her in a moment or two. She is with the singers.

"Listen!" and I heard, as he spoke, an innumerable company singing:

"Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

As the song ended I heard the echo reverberating through the Heavens: "Amen! Amen! Amen !"

Instantly the spirit of praise filled my whole being. I had never been a skilled singer, on earth, but now all my soul was attuned to sweetest melodies. Lifting my voice, the most blissful and enrapturing strains arose and continued to resound among the eternal hills of God. My whole being seemed overwhelmed with a sense of the Divine Presence -- the Divine love that had created and redeemed me, and my soul went out in a new song of rapturous praise to the Giver of all my blessings.

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## 02 -- THE SPIRIT LIVES ON FOREVER

[This excerpt is taken from Chapter 3 of "As It Is In Heaven" -- DVM]

Not There

I cannot make him dead.  
His fair sunshiny head  
Is ever bounding round my study chair;  
Yet when my eyes, now dim  
With tears, I turn to him,  
The vision vanishes -- he is not there.

I know his face is hid



Under the coffin lid;  
Closed are his eyes; cold is his forehead fair;  
My hand that marble felt;  
O'er it in prayer I knelt;  
Yet my heart whispers -- he is not there.

When at the day's calm close,  
Before we seek repose,  
I'm with his mother, offering up our prayer  
What'er I may be saying,  
I am in spirit praying  
For our boy's spirit, though -- he is not there.

Not there. Where, then, is he?  
The form I used to see  
Was but the raiment that he used to wear.  
The grave that now doth press  
Upon that cast off dress,  
Is but his wardrobe locked: -- he is not there.

He lives in all the past  
He lives; nor, to the last,  
Of seeing him again will I despair;  
In dreams I see him now,  
And on his angel brow,  
I see it written, "Thou shalt see him there."

-- John Pierpont

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## AN UNUSUAL EXPERIENCE OF BISHOP FOSTER

One memory stood out now from the mingled background: it was an experience related by Bishop [Randolph Sinks] Foster, when in the earth-life.

One spring morning, when he was away from home, he was awakened by a weird and strange sound that stole through the open casement and roused him. A sound that somehow thrilled more deeply into his soul than any other sound in mere animate nature. It was the cooing of a dove. It came borne in on the morning air, and he listened.

As he listened to its swell it choked him, almost broke his heart, and in a moment he saw a dove, on a broken limb of a walnut-tree standing by an old crooked lane, down by a worm fence; and he saw its bosom heaving as if its heart would break. He gazed at it. He was a little boy, standing on the yard-fence of his father's house. More than fifty years had elapsed since that event, but it stood out before him that morning as if it had been but yesterday.

"By a strange law of association, starting with the early memory, he lived life over again. He went in and saw his mother, beautiful as she was in her young womanhood. She put her hands on his head, kissed him and soothed his childish sorrows. He bowed at her knee and recited his infant prayers again.

Then came early school days, and old playmates gathered about him, and old loves and joys, were lived over; creeks, hills, lanes, fields, and woods familiar to childhood, looked at him with their old familiar look, each alive and palpitating with precious memories. His cheeks were bedewed with tears, as the thrilling pictures with such strange vividness passed before him.

Voices of the long-since dead sounded on that still morning air; he seemed to hear them calling over the gulf of half a hundred years as they greeted him in that long ago.

Then he was a young man. His college days were passed. The wide world was before him. With anxious and trembling expectation he was looking into the future, all uncertain of what might be its sorrows or successes. His horse was at the gate, his father's blessing sounded on his ear afresh, his mother's tearful farewell was repeated. He hastily mounted the horse and rode away.

Then opened to him the long journey of years up to that morning, stretching over seas, oceans, continents, almost the entire globe. Cities, towns, temples, museums, peoples, from every land which he had visited, rose up around him with minute exactness. He knew that he was the same self through all the changes of all the years. The same that spring morning, though gray and scarred, that gazed with tearful sorrow on the moaning dove fifty years before.

His body had changed and many times vanished away, but he abided; the years had driven him from house to house, time and again, but they had not impaired him. That which abode was a spirit. Bodies changed and died, only spirit remained.

[What a contrast between the "Cooing of Bishop Foster's Dove" and the "Quoth the Raven, Nevermore!" of Edgar Allen Poe. -- DVM]

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### 03 -- ON SPIRIT WINGS

[This excerpt is taken from Chapter 4 of the book.]

"Who maketh the clouds his chariot and walketh upon the wings of the wind." (Psa. 104:3)

#### Not Changed But Glorified

Not changed but glorified. Oh, beauteous language  
For those who weep,  
Mourning the loss of some dear face departed,  
Fallen asleep.

Hushed into silence, never more to comfort  
The hearts of men,  
Gone, like the sunshine of another country,  
Beyond our ken.

O dearest dead, we saw thy white soul shining  
Behind the face,  
Bright with the beauty and celestial glory  
Of an immortal grace.  
What wonder that we stumble, faint and weeping,  
And sick with fears,  
Since thou hast left us -- all alone with sorrow,  
And blind with tears.

Can it be possible no words shall welcome  
Our coming feet?  
How will it look, that face that we have cherished,  
When next we meet?  
Will it be changed, so glorified and saintly  
That we shall know it not?  
Will there be nothing that will say, "I love you."  
And "I have not forgot."

Oh! faithless heart, the same loved face transfigured.  
Shall meet thee there,  
Less sad, less wistful, in immortal beauty  
Divinely fair.  
The mortal veil, washed pure with many weepings,  
Is rent away,  
And the great soul that sat within its prison  
Hath found the day.

And we shall find once more, beyond earth's sorrows,  
Beyond these skies,  
In the fair city of the "sure foundations"  
Those heavenly eyes.  
With the same welcome, shining through their  
sweetness,  
That met us here;  
Eyes, from whose beauty God has banished weeping  
And wiped away the tear.

-- Author Unknown

\* \* \*

"On earth," I said, "I sometimes heard of persons, who, when dying, thought the angels were near. Do they minister on such occasions?"

"Yes! very often."

"I remember," I said, "an incident once told me by my pastor. He had an acquaintance, B\_\_\_\_, a devoted Christian, who enjoyed the consciousness of his acceptance with God. He lived a happy, joyous life. A friend of B\_\_\_\_'s whose life was an exceptionally pure and noble one, was nevertheless troubled with doubts and fears which kept him in a state of despondency.

"One morning, the former died very suddenly, before any had heard of his illness. His friend was out in the field when suddenly an overwhelming power came upon him. He thought he heard the rustling of pinions, and a great joy filled his soul. Every doubt and fear was gone, and his joy was unspeakable and full of glory. With it came the assurance that the angels had come for B\_\_\_\_. He went to the latter's house and asked:

"B. is dead, is he not?' 'Yes,' was the reply. 'He died at six o'clock this morning? Yes, how did you hear of it?'

"I knew it, for I heard the rustle of the angels' wings as they came for him."

"Ever after his heart was overflowing with peace and joy."

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#### 04 -- PAYSON'S FORETASTE OF HEAVENLY JOYS

[The following is taken from Chapter 7 of the book.]

"Our Heavenly Father," said I, "used often to give His children a foretaste of these joys on earth! The poet sings:--

"The men of grace have found  
Glory begun below,  
Celestial fruit on earthly ground  
From faith and hope may grow."

I remember the experience of the Rev. Dr. Payson, the distinguished Congregational Clergyman, who passed from earth in the vigor of his young manhood. He had been reading Bunyan's description of the land of Beulah, where the sun shines and the birds sing day and night. He said:

"I used to doubt whether there was such a place, but now my own experience has convinced me of it, and it infinitely transcends-all my previous conceptions. I think the happiness I enjoy is similar to that enjoyed by glorified spirits before the resurrection."

In a letter to his sister written a short time before his death, he said:

"Were I to adopt the figurative language of Bunyan, I might date this letter from the land of Beulah, of which I have been for some weeks a happy inhabitant. The celestial city is full in my view. Its glories beam upon me, its breezes fan me, its odors are wafted to me, its sounds strike my ears, and its spirit is breathed into my heart.

"Nothing separates me from it but the river of death, which now appears but as an insignificant rill, that may be crossed at a single step, whenever God shall give permission. The Sun of Righteousness has been gradually drawing nearer and nearer, appearing larger and brighter as he approaches, and now he fills the whole hemisphere; pouring forth a flood of glory, in which I seem to float like an insect in the beams of the sun; exulting, yet almost trembling while I gaze on this excessive brightness, and wondering with unutterable wonder why God should deign thus to shine upon a sinful worm. A single heart and a single tongue seem altogether inadequate to my wants; I want a whole heart for every separate emotion, and a whole tongue to express that emotion.

"O, my sister! my sister! Could you but know what awaits the Christian; could you know only so much as I know, you could not refrain from rejoicing and even leaping for joy.

"Labors, trials, troubles, would be nothing. You would rejoice in afflictions; and, like Paul and Silas, sing God's praises in the darkest night, and in the deepest dungeon."

When very near the end, he said,

"My soul, instead of growing weaker and more languishing, as my body does, seems to be endued with an angel's energies, and to be ready to break from the body and join those around the throne. It seems as if my soul had found a pair of new wings, and was eager to try them."

Thus his spirit seemed floating and basking in the bright and joyful dawn of immortal life.

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## 05 -- THE SHINING CITY

[This is Chapter 8 from the book. I do not wish to detract from the blessing of anyone who reads this excerpt. I will only call the reader's attention to the fact that Jesus said in Luke 20:35 -- "But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage." In this chapter the author pictures herself as still the wife of her earthly husband -- a relationship that I do not believe will exist in Heaven. If such relationships existed there, just think of the complications involved when a saint of God had had -- by reason of their death -- several spouses on earth. In Matthew 22:24-28 Jesus was questioned about whose wife in the resurrection a woman would be who had had seven husbands on earth. Jesus replied in Matthew 22:29-30 -- "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of

God in heaven." There will be no spousal relationships in heaven like those on earth, the one and only Marriage there being that of The Lamb and His Bride, the Church. -- DVM]

\* \* \*

"And the city was pure gold, like unto pure glass." (Rev. 21:18)

## JERUSALEM

Jerusalem! Jerusalem!  
Thy streets of pearl and gold  
Are trod by the blest feet of them  
We knew and loved of old.  
Their voices full of calm delight  
Steal through the radiant air--  
Jerusalem! Jerusalem!  
Our hearts are with them there.

Jerusalem! Jerusalem!  
No gloom -- no dark'ning night  
Can ever reach thy bright abode  
For God is now thy light.  
O sweet and blessed country!  
O many mansions rare!  
Jerusalem! Jerusalem!  
Our hearts are with them there.

Jerusalem! Jerusalem!  
I see thy happy throng  
With robes of white, and harps of gold,  
All jubilant with song.  
O princely bowers! O land of flowers!  
O lily-beds most fair!  
Jerusalem! Jerusalem!  
Our hearts are with them there.

Jerusalem! Jerusalem!  
On thy securest shore  
I hope to meet, and fondly greet,  
The loved who went before,  
O home of fadeless splendor!  
O joys beyond compare!  
Jerusalem! Jerusalem!  
Our hearts are with them there.

-- From Bernard of Cluny

Arranged by Mary Sparkes Wheeler

As my dear one talked I listened, letting the great fact of heaven take full possession of my soul. Like a child, first experiencing some new phase of earthly life, and gladdening its heart in its beauty, so my soul reveled in the promises of celestial things.

Time and matter had, for me, undergone the last supernal change. The lost was found. Death itself was chained. The Life everlasting which had claimed so many of those I had loved--among them my own sweet little sister, who died a year before my marriage -- would now yield them up again, unchanged to my affection. I would see and know them now.

How much and variously we had discussed that great question on earth: Shall we know each other there? I had comforted myself often with the reflection that Peter, James and John, on the Mount of Transfiguration, knew Moses and Elijah, though they had never before seen them. Moses had died on Mount Nebo, fifteen hundred years before, and God had buried him, and it had been a thousand years since Elijah had shaken off the dust of earth in the wilderness of Jericho and ascended in his chariot of fire to the world of light. No accurate description of their features could have existed. But the disciples knew them instantly; and felt the blessed influence of their presence.

David said of his infant child, I remembered, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." It would have been no comfort to David to go to him unless he recognized him. I was one of those who clung to the assurance that memory can never be annihilated. Against all doubts I had flung that passionate protest of Nelson's:

"Shall this reasonable expectation prove a delusion? Shall this longing desire never be gratified? Why then is it implanted in the breast of the bereaved and suffering? Would a being of infinite wisdom and love present this heavenly cordial to the lips of His afflicted, fainting children in this vale of tears, and then with cruel hand dash it away forever? This can never be the act of Him whose nature and whose name is love."

Now questioning was ended. My dear friends were all here. I should see Him. One friend yet remained on earth who had often said to me:

"To my faith it is as unfalteringly certain that death will bring me to those I loved, and bring them to me, as it is that it will bring to me immortality. If the one is true the other must be." I had been the first to test this fact and to prove its truth.

More than this, the meeting with those whom I had loved on earth would give us mutual joy.

Friendship 's joys are enhanced by the thought that they are eternal. There can be no more separation; and the company of the redeemed are pure. "Charity never faileth," and the love of the friends I meet here will never fail while the years of eternity roll.

I was reminded of what Baxter said while he was still a child of earth: His words found an echo in my heart just now. He said: "The expectation of loving my friends in heaven, principally enkindles my love to them while on earth, If I thought I should never know them, and consequently never love them after this life is ended, I should number them with temporal things, and love them as such, but I now delightfully converse with my pious friends in a firm persuasion that I shall converse with them forever; and I take comfort in those that are dead or absent, believing that I shall shortly meet them in heaven, and love them with a heavenly love."

Earthly regard too often has its foundation in self-interest. Sometimes the discovery of new characteristics, or a lack of supposed virtues, makes the object seem unworthy of love. But the love that here binds the pure in heart will abide forever, and grow stronger with the passage of time.

Somewhere, I thought, my friends were waiting; perhaps they already knew of my coming. They might be very near -- perhaps from just over the hill-tops yonder, one could see the pearl-gates of the Holy Jerusalem, whose vision John saw "descending out of heaven from God."

I looked up into my husband's face. "I want to see the city," I said.

Instantly, as if in answer to my exclamation, I seemed to feel all sense of bodily weight drop from me like a garment that is laid aside. I felt, rather than saw, mountains, rivers and wide stretches of landscape melt and slip away beneath me. The citizens of heaven need no carriages or cars, or any other vehicles or beasts to carry them. We have no need of wings. We walk for pleasure only, not to reach distances.

When we visit any distant place, we will to go. As on earth we moved our arms or lips, or as we spoke in obedience to our wills, so here we travel without labor or weariness. We are no longer bound by earthly conditions, as were our natural bodies. We go here or there, make ourselves visible or invisible -- in fact, shape ourselves outwardly according to the eternal will.

While we journeyed, in the far distance, as on earth dawn strikes through the morning twilight, there grew a great light, more vivid and more brilliant even than the translucent atmosphere through which we passed.

"It is the light of the city," he said, and I remembered John's words: "For the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

As the light swelled and brightened we rose higher, till with its flashing rays all about us, we looked down upon the very streets of Jerusalem the Golden-the city for whose inhabitants there is "no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain, where the former things are passed away and where God has wiped away all tears from their eyes."

During my earthly life I heard a minister say: "I was once called into a room, by a friend who said, 'I have all the foundation stones of the Holy City, and the sun is shining. Come in and look at them!' I went with him. There they were, piled upon the table. The sun was shining upon them. O the magnificence of the scene! The room was filled with glory -- all ablaze with the



glittering, shimmering sheen -- and with tears coursing down my cheeks I said: 'If these are but the foundation stones, what must the glory of the City be?' "

My eyes saw its glory but it cannot be told in any tongue that is known to mortal ear. It was one of the things that Paul saw which were "not lawful for man to utter." John tried in earthly phrases to convey an idea of its glory; he told of its light like a stone most precious, a jasper stone clear as crystal, -- of its wall-foundations garnished with jewels, sapphire, emerald, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase, amethyst -- of its twelve gates of pearl, and structures of gold like clear glass.

But all his imagination, so full of glowing, colorful images was powerless in presence of the ineffable beauty of the actual city. No wonder that John, when he had heard and seen "fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed these things." For he was still a mortal untouched by immortality. I had eternal life, and saw with the eye of the spirit, yet the glory as we descended was well nigh overpowering.

"In this city," I thought, "I have an eternal habitation. There are the many mansions of my Father, whither He went to prepare a place for me, that where He is, there I may be also."

Hand in hand we entered in at the gate, and joined the joyful throngs that moved in the streets. Soon we reached my own mansion, my "house not made with hands eternal in the heavens!"

I long to tell of my heavenly habitation -- of the loveliness that has been lavished upon it. But earthly vocabulary is empty and meaningless. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for them that love Him." As the splendid beauty of an earthly cathedral -- the harmonies of its architecture -- can never be conceived by the mind whose eyes are blinded from birth, so, to an infinitely greater degree, is the loveliness of this abode denied expression in human language.

But it is permitted to say that if in an earthly home there is a single grace or charm, whether of outer or inner beauty, that grace and charm, in the heavenly mansion is reduplicated a thousand fold. As our habits and likings on earth reflected our mental side, so here our habitations express our individuality. Each is as distinct as features are distinct from one another in the earth-life. Each is filled with the treasures that we had laid up "where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt."

If treasures of art have given us joy in our homes of earth, they are here also in greater profusion. If music has delighted us, the act of memory recreates it in tangible melody. If we have loved literature (oh that I could convey an idea of what literature means here!) we have it in wider measure; for all the literatures of the world -- of past nations and peoples, lost and buried in the forgotten dust of centuries--are open to our interest and inquiry. [It strikes me that the author's preceding statement contradicts the plain statement of God's Word in Isaiah 65:17 -- "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." -- DVM]

No wonder Joseph Parker once said while thinking of his home in heaven -- "O years, once so slow, now so quick; to my childhood long and tedious, to my manhood swift and urgent; fly,

hasten, be quicker still; the quicker the years are, the faster rolls the chariot through the wilderness and brings me to my Father's house."

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## 06 -- SEEING ELSIE

[Please continue to bear in mind as your read below that Mary Sparkes Wheeler writes as one who is already in heaven. This excerpt is Chapter 9 from "As It Is In Heaven" and includes an actual experience of Bishop Bowman.]

"And white robes were given unto every one of them." (Rev. 6.11)

### Over The River

Over the river they beckon to me--  
Loved ones who've crossed to the other side,  
The gleam of their snowy robes I see,  
But their voices are drowned in the rushing tide.  
There's one with ringlets of sunny gold,  
And eyes the reflection of heaven's own blue;  
He crossed in the twilight's gray and cold,  
And the pale mist hid him from mortal view.  
We saw not the angels who met him there;  
The gates of the city we could not see;  
Over the river, over the river,  
My brother stands waiting to welcome me.

Over the river the boatman pale  
Carried another -- the household pet;  
Her brown curls waved in the gentle gale--  
Darling Minnie. I see her yet.  
She crossed on her bosom her dimpled hands,  
And fearlessly entered the phantom bark;  
We watched it glide from the silver sands  
And all our sunshine grew strangely dark.  
We know she is safe on the farther side,  
Where all the ransomed and angels be;  
Over the river, the mystic river,  
My childhood's idol is waiting for me.

For none return from the quiet shores  
Who cross with the boatman cold and pale;  
We hear the dip of the golden oars,  
And catch a gleam of the snowy sail--  
And lo, they have passed from our yearning heart,

They cross the stream and are gone for aye;  
We may not sunder the veil apart,  
That hides from our vision the gates of day.  
We only know that their barks no more  
May sail with us o'er life's stormy sea;  
Yet somewhere I know on the unseen shore,  
They watch, and beckon and wait for me.

And I sit and think when the sunset's gold  
Is flushing river and hill and shore,  
I shall one day stand by the water cold,  
And list for the sound of the boatman's oar;  
I shall watch for a gleam of the flapping sail,  
I shall hear the boat as it nears the strand  
I shall pass from sight with the boatman pale,  
To the better shore of the spirit land;  
I shall know the loved who have gone before,  
And joyfully sweet will the meeting be,  
When over the river, the peaceful river,  
The angel of Death shall carry me.

-- Nancy A. W. Priest

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## SEEING ELSIE

As I looked out upon the wondrous city, I was filled with a sudden desire to see my parents and younger sister, who had passed from earth in the sweet purity of her childhood. There was nothing more precious to me than her winsome little self. And I had never suffered more bitter anguish than When she breathed her last in my arms.

Her suffering then brought vain questionings into my mind: "Like as a father pitieth his children." Does God pity her? Does He pity me? If so, why does lie not relieve her?. Why does He permit an innocent child to be agonized by death? I could not answer, but these lines came to me:

"Cruel seems the grain of sand  
Forced within the sensate shell,  
But a pearl is gendered, and--  
Ah, you know the parallel;  
Round our lives the water-swirl  
Says and sings, "No pain, no pearl."

I had learned now how supremely true the poet sang.

Thinking of my little sister, I wondered much how she would look. My husband, I knew, had often seen her, and he had told me that she had been looking forward to our meeting. I knew that somewhere in the heavenly world where the pure in heart were congregated, she was living with God. But what name did she bear? What form was hers? What was now her occupation? I found myself repeating the familiar words:

"Day after day we think what she is doing  
In those bright realms of air;  
Year after year, her tender steps pursuing  
Behold her grown more fair."

Years had passed since her coming to the Morning-Land. She must have grown in stature and in experience -- perhaps was now one of the brighter spirits that are closest to the throne of Jesus. And I hoped, to whatever heights of glory she had attained, she would come to me first in some shape that would remind me of the little Elsie I had known and kissed.

I remembered the experience of Bishop Bowman, when on his return from Japan, he lay ill of a fever which his physicians believed must end fatally.

"I seemed," he said, "to fall into a kind of ecstasy, when I actually did not know whether I was alive or dead. I imagined that I was on board a most magnificent ship and heard the captain say: 'Stop her,' which I thought to be the voice of my Divine Master, when my eighteen months old child, who had died twenty years before, came to me and said that she had heard that I was coming and had come to meet me.

"After some little conversation which I do not recollect, she said, 'Do you not think I have grown, Papa?' She then rose in a form of glory, which I had never before witnessed and never more expect to see until I die, and then returned to her usual state, saying that she had come in that shape to see if I should know her. She then said that many friends had asked after me and were awaiting my coming, and that all old lady and gentleman had taken her up and kissed her, saying that her papa was their boy.

"I then asked her where mamma was. She replied, 'O, she is off doing something for the Lord, but will be on the wharf to meet us on our arrival.'

"All this left an impression upon me by the magnificence of the surroundings, and it was a season of great preciousness to me. It seems to me that I have come back from the other world; and although it is peculiar for me to say I was dead, it seems as if I was not in the body."

I had always believed, on earth, that he who passed through this experience had been very near to heaven, and I did not doubt that his daughter had really come to him.

I have learned since that, as in heaven love rules supreme, it was the very force of my love and longing to see the absent one that drew her to me. As I mused of her, I caught strains of the same delicious music that I had heard so soon after my first awakening. It seemed to come from thousands of voices and to fill all space with its melody. To my surprise I saw a multitude of

children approaching me, all clothed in white garments. The song they sang was indescribable, save that it seemed to mingle in infinite variations the phrases: "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of heaven."

As they drew nearer they separated, the greater number passing, but a smaller group coming toward me. And I saw that the leader of the latter was my own little sister. She had been used to wear white on earth, but the white in which she was now clothed was like no white there. It shone with unspeakable brilliancy, as if spangled with gems reflecting the light of God.

Instinctively I put my hands over my eyes to protect them, as on earth one is obliged to do in the face of the sun. I had not yet learned that in heaven the eye not only has sufficient strength to bear all the light of this brilliant world, but that it rejoices in it as the ear rejoices in heaven's exquisite music.

I had seen nothing as yet, even in heaven to compare in any measure with the beauty of that band of dear little ones. But most wondrous of all was the glory that rested on my sister's face. It seemed, as I gazed, to obliterate from my memory, every trace it had ever borne of agony or tears. I could scarcely conceive that they had ever entered into any portion of her earthly experience.

Elsie came running quickly to me and her arms closed about me in a fond embrace. "I am so glad," she said joyfully. "We have talked of you so often and never ceased watching for you. We knew you would come in God's good time."

Her comrades' arms were filled with flowers. They put them on my head, and in my hands and laid them at my feet, and then, breaking again into the same strain they had sung on coming, hastened to rejoin the larger company, leaving me alone with my darling, her arms still about me and looking into my face with the same wondrous eyes, save that they were more luminous and ethereal, than I had known in the long ago.

We talked of all that filled our hearts, of our past earthly home and our present heavenly abode.

"Do I look as you expected?" she asked me as we parted.

"Yes," I answered, "but more beautiful."

"I came in this form," she said, "so that you would know me. But it is ten years since I was alive on earth. I have grown since then. You remember Longfellow's 'Resignation'? And smiling, she recited:

"Not as a child shall we again behold her;  
For when with raptures wild  
In our embraces we again enfold her,  
She will not be a child;  
But a fair maiden in her Father's mansion,  
Clothed with celestial grace;

And beautiful in all the soul's expansion  
Shall we behold her face."

"Would you like to see me as I am now?" she asked. Without waiting for my answer she, who had come to me there a little child with hand in mine, flashed suddenly into taller and majestic beauty the "fair maiden" whose countenance of wisdom and sublimity transported me with delight. As she passed from my view, I heard loved familiar voices, and turned to see my dear father and mother standing near, waiting to embrace me.

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## 07 -- JAMES BRADLEY FINLEY'S HEAVENLY EXPERIENCE AND HEALING

[Most of the following is found in Chapter 14 of "As It Is In Heaven" -- J. B. Finley's account of his heavenly experience and healing. However, I decided to take the story directly from Finley's Autobiography and to include with it a bit more than Mary Sparkes Wheeler had in her quotation therefrom. I would also mention here to the reader that the following books by James Bradley Finley are found in the HDM Digital Library: His Autobiography -- hdm0683; Life Among The Indians -- hdm0268; and Sketches Of Western Methodism -- hdm0230.]

\* \* \*

It was in the summer of 1842. Worn down with fatigue, I was completing my last round of quarterly meetings, and winding up the labors of a very toilsome year. I had scarcely finished my work till I was most violently attacked with bilious fever, and it was with great difficulty I reached home. The disease had taken so violent a hold on my system that I sank rapidly under its power. Everything that kind attention and medical skill could impart was resorted to, to arrest its ravages; but all was in vain, and my life was despaired of. On the seventh night, in a state of entire insensibility to all around me, when the last ray of hope had departed, and my weeping family and friends were standing around my couch waiting to see me breathe my last, it seemed to me that a heavenly visitant entered my room. It came to my side, and, in the softest and most silvery tones, which fell like rich music on my ear, it said, "I have come to conduct you to another state and place of existence." In an instant I seemed to rise, and, gently borne by my angel guide, I floated out upon the ambient [surrounding] air. Soon earth was lost in the distance, and around us, on every side, were worlds of light and glory. On, on, away, away from world to luminous worlds afar, we sped with the velocity of thought. At length we reached the gates of paradise; and O, the transporting scenes that fell upon my vision as the emerald portals, wide and high, rolled back upon their golden hinges! Then, in its fullest extent, did I realize the invocation of the poet:

"Burst, ye emerald gates, and bring  
To my raptured vision  
All the ecstatic joys that spring  
Round the bright Elysian."\*

[\*Elysian Fields in Greek mythology the abode of the blessed after death, a place or state of ideal happiness. -- Oxford Dict.]

Language, however, is inadequate to describe what then, with unveiled eyes, I saw. The vision is indelibly pictured on my heart. Before me, spread out in beauty, was a broad sheet of water, clear as crystal, not a single ripple on its surface, and its purity and clearness indescribable. On each side of this lake, or river, rose up the most tall and beautiful trees, covered with all manner of fruits and flowers, the brilliant hues of which were reflected in the bosom of the placid river.

While I stood gazing with joy and rapture at the scene, a convoy of angels was seen floating in the pure ether of that world. They all had long wings, and, although they went with the greatest rapidity, yet their wings were folded close by their side. While I gazed I asked my guide who they were, and what their mission. To this he responded, "They are angels, dispatched to the world from whence you came on an errand of mercy." I could hear strains of the most entrancing melody all around me, but no one was discoverable but my guide.

At length I said, "Will it be possible for me to have a sight of some of the just made perfect in glory?" Just then there came before us three persons; one had the appearance of a male, the other a female, and the third an infant. The appearance of the first two was somewhat similar to the angels I saw, with the exception that they had crowns upon their heads of the purest yellow, and harps in their hands. Their robes, which were full and flowing, were of the purest white. Their countenances were lighted up with a heavenly radiance, and they smiled upon me with ineffable sweetness.

There was nothing with which the blessed babe or child could be compared. It seemed to be about three feet high. Its wings, which were long and most beautiful, were tinged with all the colors of the rainbow. Its dress seemed to be of the whitest silk, covered with the softest white down. The driven snow could not exceed it for whiteness or purity. Its face was all radiant with glory; its very smile now plays around my heart. I gazed and gazed with wonder upon this heavenly child.

At length I said, "If I have to return to earth, from whence I came, I should love to take this child with me, and show it to the weeping mothers of earth. Methinks, when they see it, they will never shed another tear over their children when they die." So anxious was I to carry out the desire of my heart, that I made a grasp at the bright and beautiful one, desiring to clasp it in my arms, but it eluded my grasp, and plunged into the river of life. Soon it rose up from the waters, and as the drops fell from its expanding wings, they seemed like diamonds, so brightly did they sparkle. Directing its course to the other shore, it flew up to one of the topmost branches of one of life's fair trees. With a look of most seraphic sweetness it gazed upon me, and then commenced singing in heaven's own strains, "To Him that hath loved me, and washed me from my sins in his own blood, to him be glory both now and forever. Amen."

At that moment the power of the eternal God came upon me, and I began to shout, and, clapping my hands, I sprang from my bed, and was healed as instantly as the lame man in the beautiful porch of the temple, who "went walking, and leaping, and praising God." Overwhelmed with the glory I saw and felt, I could not cease praising God.

The next Sabbath I went to campmeeting, filled with the love and power of God. There I told the listening thousands what I saw and felt, and what God had done for me, and loud were the shouts of glory that reverberated through the forests. Though years have rolled away since that bright, happy hour, yet the same holy flame is burning in my heart, and I retain the same glorious victory. "Hallelujah! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

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## 08 -- THE WONDERFUL DYING EXPERIENCE OF BISHOP HAVEN

[I conclude the excerpts from "As It Is In Heaven" by Mary Sparkes Wheeler with the following, taken from Chapter 20.]

We remember with pleasure, even here in this immortal state, the closing hours of our beloved Bishop Gilbert Haven. Death came to him in the midst of his honors and usefulness -- in the glory of his manhood, when his eye had not dimmed nor his natural strength abated.

"There was in him an exuberance of feeling; a hopefulness that made life desirable; but his faith did not waver; God's presence filled him with joy. He had preached the supports of the Gospel to others: they stood the test of his dying hours. To one of his friends he said --

"I have been preaching these long years, and I want you to say to the brethren now for me, I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day. Then he shouted with all his strength, "Victory, victory! victory through the blood of the Lamb!"

To another he said, "He is a whole Christ; a full Saviour, glory to God for such a salvation!" To a third he said, "Good-night, doctor; when we meet again it will be Good-morning!" The whole day on which he died was filled with exclamations of "Glory! glory!! glory!!!" An hour before he died he fell asleep; then awaking he said, "There is no river here; it is all beautiful." Thus the happy spirit passed into the heavens.

Some time before his death the countenance of Dr. J. F. Chaplain was illumined as with a divine beauty. His smiles were heavenly. Lifting his hands in astonishment at what he saw, he would exclaim in holy triumph, "O wonderful! wonderful! The room is full of angels. Don't you see them? The angels are all around. They are in my room; they are round my bed. I see Jesus! I have royal escorts. The ineffable appears in sight.

"For me my elder brethren stay,  
And angels beckon me away,  
And Jesus bids me come.'

"Weigh me down or I will leave you," he said, lifting himself up as though constrained to join the holy ones whom he beheld. A few hours later his earthly life ceased, he stepped into the waiting chariot and was gone with the angels.



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THE END