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RAYS OF LIGHT IN THE VALLEY OF SORROW
By Henry Wheeler

Author of "Methodism and the Temperance Reformation,
Deaconesses, Ancient And Modern," Etc.

With A Concluding Chapter On
The Recognition Of Friends In Heaven,
By The Late
Rev. Reuben Nelson

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God" -- (Isaiah).

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DEDICATION

To The
Memory Of My Brother,
Joseph W. Wheeler,
Who
Fell In The Strength Of His Manhood, And
Was Early Crowned With
Immortality,

These Pages Are Affectionately
Dedicated.

* * * * *

PREFACE

These pages are submitted to the Christian public with a desire to throw a ray of light across some pathway darkened by affliction. We have often wished for a small volume which we could put into the home made desolate by death, and thereby convey instruction which could not well be spoken. "To comfort them for the dead," and "give them the cup of consolation to drink for their father or their mother." If this should be received with favor for this purpose, it will be a source of gratitude and praise to God.

It is not designed as an argumentative discussion of the topics presented, but simply, to show some of the elements of comfort and hope that abound in the established doctrines of the Holy Scriptures.

It was our intention to insert a chapter of our own on "The Recognition of Friends in Heaven," but by the kindness of Mrs. R. Nelson, a manuscript upon that subject, written by her late lamented husband, Rev. R. Nelson, D. D., late Agent of the Methodist Episcopal Book Concern of New York, was placed in our hands with the privilege of using it. This we have given as the closing chapter.

We remember when Dr. Nelson preached on this subject at our camp-meetings, and listening thousands stood enchanted by the spell of his eloquence; when vast audiences wept as he presented, with his whole soul on fire, the comforting aspects of his favorite theme. The warm heart, the deep emotion, the noble soul, projected themselves into the spoken word, and enkindled feeling and inspiration in all hearts. That voice is silent now, but we are glad of the opportunity of putting these thoughts of our noble friend into permanent form, and within reach of those who held him in high esteem and affection.

The whole is sent forth with the earnest hope that it may glorify God and comfort the hearts of men.

H. W.
Philadelphia, May, 1883.

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PREFACE TO THE EIGHTH THOUSAND.

The author is profoundly grateful for the cordial reception accorded to this volume, and for the many acknowledgments he has received from its readers, of comfort and spiritual help it has brought to many sorrowful hearts. It is believed its full mission has not been accomplished,

as the time can never come when the homes of men will not be invaded by sorrow and death, and when religious truth will not be a consoling force and an inspiration to hope.

This Eighth Thousand is therefore sent forth with the earnest prayer that God may sanction it and make it the channel through which the divine Spirit may comfort the souls of His people.

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01 -- SUNSHINE AFTER THE RAIN

The best fruit loads the broken bough;
And in the wounds our sufferings plow,
Immortal love sows sovereign seed. -- Massey.

For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but things which are not seen are eternal. -- Paul.

Life is a checkered scene. It is well represented by transitions in nature. The bright sunshine is emblematic of days of prosperity, when gladness fills the soul, and the spirit is buoyant and tuneful as the birds singing their morning song. The dark clouds and heavy laden skies, the storms and fierce tornadoes are emblems of physical pain, of mental depression or agitation, of dark days when friends die and prosperity flies, when hope droops and faith is stretched to its utmost tension. But the storm does not last forever; neither will our affliction. The heavy clouds will be swept away, and the clear sunshine will brighten and bless the landscape. While the cloud overshadows us we are apt to partake of its gloom; but we must think of the undimmed sun that shines above the cloud, and wait patiently for the light that always succeeds the darkness.

The changes in the aspect of nature are no greater than are those in our life. There are all the gradations from the peaceful calm to the raging storm, from the bright sunshine to the darkness of midnight. But as in nature the storm has its ministry of good, contributing to the purifying of the atmosphere, and all changes work for the welfare of man and the development of natural products, so, by the grace of God, "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.ö

The palace and the cottage are alike visited by afflictive dispensations. No class in society, no position in life, is exempt. Gold cannot bribe, nor skill ward off, nor beauty charm physical decay or disease. No human body is absolutely free from pain, no heart is left untouched, no circle left unbroken. Afflictions are more common than we think. We deem our own the hardest lot because felt and seen, while that of others is concealed from view. "Each heart knoweth its own bitterness." It is only by experience of suffering that we can judge of its poignancy, and only by observation beyond our own circle can we judge of its prevalence.

ôThis life of ours is a wild Aeolian harp of many a joyous strain,
Yet under them all there runs a loud, perpetual wail as of souls in pain."

To the good suffering brings its own antidote; with the pain comes the promise, "My grace shall be sufficient for thee." Paul spoke of the sufferings he endured in the cause of Christ, but they were to him badges of distinction -- he gloried in them. "Yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities." He magnified the grace of God in Christ which sustained him. His weakness and pain were only opportunities for the display of the goodness and power of his Lord. So Christ was honored in his servant's affliction.

Our estimate of affliction will be modified by the standpoint from which we see it. If we ascend the mount on which Christ suffered and died, and look on it in the light which radiates from the cross, it will appear as part of God's great disciplinary plan by which his servants are made perfect. When the world looks dull and heaven looks bright, when we close our eyes to things temporal and open them to things eternal, physical or mental pain works our highest moral good. It is then something more than suffering: it is the correction of evil, the polishing of the mirror that it may reflect more perfectly the image of the Master. It is the refining of the gold by purging away the dross.

Jacob mourned greatly when bereaved of his sons, not knowing that God was thereby working the salvation of his family. In his short human sight he mournfully exclaimed, "All these things are against me." How intensely human is this expression! The patriarch's sorrow came near his heart. Only the dark side of the cloud was visible, and his faith could not pierce it. He could not see the sunshine beyond. The final cause, the remote consequences he did not contemplate, and all these things seemed against him. But from the standpoint of grace these things were all for him. Joseph's way to greatness and power lay through the slavery into which his brothers sold him, and Israel's path to temporal salvation and national glory lay through the darkness of Egypt; but the patriarch's faith was not equal to its discovery, and God had not yet made known his purposes.

The traveller standing on the banks of a river is impressed with its width and threatening aspect, as the waves foam and dash at his feet; but when he ascends to some great altitude and looks down, it is like a thread of silver adorning the landscape. How much higher was Paul than Jacob! His faith took hold of eternal things. "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

Afflictions come to us by permission of the divine Father. We may sometimes be harassed by the thought that Satan has some power over us for evil. He is the "prince of darkness," who has the "power of death," "the prince of the power of the air," and power over the physical as well as over the moral nature of man is attributed to him. We may be able to correct the representations of the early church on this point by the assured results of modern science; yet we cannot deny to Satan an influence or agency in the sphere of nature without denying the statements of revealed truth. Satanic influence and power are manifest in the sufferings of Job. And these principalities and powers, these "rulers of the darkness of this world," these "wicked spirits in high places," against which we "wrestle," may touch with fiery finger either body or soul, and inflict physical or mental suffering. But the eye of God is ever upon those who love him. Not a hair of their heads can fall to the ground without his notice. Whatever may be the direct cause of our suffering, the divine One has knowledge of it, and it forms a part of his plan. Our duty is therefore humble submission; we must not rebel under the chastisement. The strokes may be severe and in quick succession; the suffering may be great and the providence inscrutable, but behind the agency, whatever it may be, there is a heart that throbs with tenderness, and a directing mind infinite in wisdom. How beautiful and tender are the words of inspiration! "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" It was in prosperity that David said, "I shall never be moved." The success of all our plans may lead us to presumptuous sins. Unbroken prosperity may lead to forgetfulness of God and the undervaluing of his mercies, but the withdrawal of the sunshine leads us to look for the sun.

Paul calls our affliction "light." We would be afraid to apply this word to earthly sorrow did we not find it in the book of God. Our affliction does not always seem light. When the cherished hopes of a lifetime are blasted in a moment, when the light of the house goes out, when the heart is crushed, when all the argosies of our life and hope are stranded wrecks upon a bleak and stormy shore, our afflictions are heavy, judged from any standpoint that is not furnished by the Christian's faith. We can bear them patiently when we hear the promise, "I will never leave thee, I will never forsake thee." But how terribly sad for those to whom all that remain of life are the worm, the canker, and the grief," and for whom no beacon light shines from beyond the sea.

Paul did not intend to trifle with our pain or insult our grief. He looked upon affliction from a pure and exalted position. He viewed it in contrast with "the glory which shall be revealed." He was himself a sufferer, and in itself his suffering was great and heavy. He "bore in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus," "died daily," was "in jeopardy every hour," "in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. In weariness and painfulness, in

watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." Such were some of Paul's sufferings; and only when viewed from the mount of God's redeeming love are such afflictions light. From this they come in contrast with the sufferings of Christ, and are not worthy the comparison. He was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." His soul was "exceeding sorrowful even unto death." And all his sufferings were endured to atone for our sins.

If we look at our suffering as punitive in character, how small it is in comparison with the demands of divine justice. Thank God, "the chastisement of our peace " was upon Christ, "and by his stripes we are healed." How light our sorrow in comparison with the "exceeding great and eternal weight of glory." It is "but for a moment." It does not seem so short to us, so difficult is it to lose sight of the present in contemplation of the future. But long weary nights of watching, long months of anxious suspense, long years of widowhood, a lifetime of poverty and sorrow or sickness and pain are but as a moment in comparison with eternity.

Be of good comfort, ye afflicted ones. God holds in reserve a blessing for the eyes that weep. The dark night must end at sunrise. The icy barriers that winter has thrown around us will melt in the warm summer's sun.

"Adversity's cold frost will soon be o'er;
It heralds brighter days; the joyous spring
Is cradled on the winter's icy breast
And yet comes flushed in beauty."

If our affliction be sanctified to the good of our souls, its influence will reach to both worlds. If it work for our spiritual good now, it will enhance our glory hereafter. Whether good or ill shall result will depend on the use we make of it. "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." We must look beyond all temporal good to things spiritual and eternal. The soul that pants for God will find itself lifted nearer to him by the crosses that lie in the pathway of life. The unregenerate heart that rebels will sink lower in the moral scale.

The believer in Christ will see in affliction a reminder of his mortality, the first crumbling of the house of clay, and will long for his house which is from heaven, that "mortality might be swallowed up of life." "For we know that if our house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a house, a building of God not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." "Why should I murmur?" said Henry Martyn, in his last sickness. "Weakness, peril and pain are but the ministering angels whose office it is to conduct me to glory. The holiest weep, but their tears, as raindrops in the spring-time, are shot through with sunbeams; they sorrow not as those without hope."

The hour of sickness is often an hour of deep communion with God and of special manifestations of divine favor. The sickroom is not always filled with gloom, but often with the light and glory of God. Incidents illustrative of this are frequently seen. We saw recently an aged disciple whose latter years were filled with intense suffering, waiting the summons of her

Lord. She had not on account of disease rested upon her bed for many months. As a means of grace she wished to partake with her friends of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and in the emblems of his broken body and shed blood to find some fresh memorials of his grace. Suffering was depicted upon every lineament of her face, and at the same time perfect resignation to the will of God. As the service proceeded her soul was filled unutterably full of glory, and she shouted aloud the praises of her Lord and Saviour, and rejoiced in the unclouded light of God's approval. It was indeed sunshine after the rain. That humble room, filled as it was with evidences of human suffering, was also the dwelling-place of God, and angel visitants ministered to the soul soon to be released from the prison-house of clay.

"The chamber where the good man meets his fate
Is privileged beyond this common walk
Of virtuous life, quite on the verge of heaven."

In affliction the heart is made tender and yields more readily to the divine will. When earthly props are cut from beneath us, the soul sends out her tendrils to grasp more firmly the strong arm of God. Many of God's children are, like the Captain of their salvation, made perfect through suffering, and the soul, chastened and subdued, rests in the bosom of God and longs to awake in his likeness. "Tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

When visiting an invalid lady who had for years been confined to her house, we quoted the scriptures which teach that affliction is beneficial, and asked, "How does your experience corroborate the divine word?" She replied, "When young I was full of life and gayety. I asked God to lead me nearer to himself and make me more like Jesus. He has done it, and by pain and sickness I have been established in Christ; others are better for my sufferings and I am thankful. I cannot work for God, but æthey also serve who only stand and wait.' I prefer my life of pain to that I would have lived in health. Such testimony can only be given by a heart under the influence of grace. "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight." The promises of God are fill given for practical tests. They are never found wanting in real life." Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

There is a close connection between suffering and grace. In proportion to the melting is the refining and purifying. It is not uncommon to have a baptism of the Holy Spirit in the day of trial. It should not be, forgotten that the distinctive name of the Holy Ghost is "The Comforter," and one of his holy offices is to comfort the afflicted. His coming was promised by Christ when the disciples were anticipating the sorrows of bereavement. "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." The tenderness of the Holy Spirit is often seen in the hour of pain and bereavement. He takes of the things of Jesus and shows them unto us, thereby lifting the drooping spirit and animating our faith and hope by divine consolations and visions of the glory beyond. Then we glorify God in suffering as much as in health and prosperity, and when the trial is past, the purity, wrought by the Holy Spirit through the agency of suffering, remains, and the soul shines resplendent in the glory of Christ. The landscape is never more beautiful than after the storm, when nature's tears are sparkling upon every tree and flower, when the sunshine bursts through

the angry elements, and God's bow of peace is painted upon the bosom of the retiring storm-cloud. So grace and purity are never more beautiful than when they come as the result of trial, and are seen shining through pain and suffering.

If the glory of the present life is enhanced through suffering, what of the life to come? The exceeding great and eternal weight of glory belongs to the future life, and much of its brilliancy will be the result of sanctified suffering here. Our afflictions are the discipline, the pruning and cutting by which we are made to bear much fruit to the glory of God. They are the polishing and burnishing by which we are made to reflect the divine image. The "glory" comes not by merit, but of grace through discipline, and the pain of discipline is not worthy of comparison with the "weight of glory." "For I reckon that the suffering of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." Such was Paul's reckoning, and he had counted the cost. If we could see him now, with the martyr's crown upon his brow, foremost of the sons of God, we would understand, better than we can in this life, the relation between suffering and reward. And Paul would say, "I am not disappointed in my estimate of the glory that awaits the righteous."

Michael Angelo, while working on the block of marble from which was to come the beautiful statue as the result of his genius, said, "As the marble wastes, the statue grows." So with the soul in all the elements of moral purity and beauty. The blows, the chiselling, the wasting under the hand of God will all contribute to our preparation for glory.

We lose much by unbelief. Some are tired waiting, it seems so long and the discipline is tedious. But God understands his own plans and will bring his work to perfection. "It is as if some artist were blamed for the length of time bestowed on some piece of work, some painting or sculpture. There are stories of the impatience with which the veil or the scaffolding has been regarded, concealing the operations; but at last came the day when the veil or scaffolding was removed, and there rose the burst of exulting joy, for the work stood fully revealed and worthy of the long period of waiting. And what if some hour should strike, when, amidst the acclamations of the universe, the glory shall be revealed as the compensation for the suffering; when the shaping, the polishing, the enamelling, and the inlaying shall all be done; when God shall say, Come, behold my work; now at length it sees the light." Our impatience and weariness in waiting would then appear as the result of unbelief, and God would be justified in his work. "He hath done all things well," will burst from the lips of the saved, and the glory revealed will redound, not to the marble but to the sculptor, not to the soul but to God.

* * * * *

02 -- THE PITIYING FATHER

And tears once filled his eye beside a mortal's grave,
Who left his throne on high the lost to seek and save,
And fresh, from age to age, their memory shall be kept,
While man shall bless the page which tells that Jesus wept.
--Barton

Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth him that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that ye are dust. -- David.

There is much comfort in the thought that God is always close by our side -- that we are never alone; and to the soul in harmony with God there comes the greatest happiness from conscious communion with him.

"Where'er I dwell, I dwell with thee,
In heaven, in earth, or on the sea."

That system of philosophy which represents God as so far from us as to be regardless of our wants cannot commend itself to the human mind. It is cold, distant and desolate; unadapted to our condition, and mocks the yearnings of our nature. That view of Divine Providence which regards it as only general, without descending to the details of each individual life, does not meet the expectations of creatures whose nature calls for sympathy and whose dependence pleads for support. A God whose government is magnificent, whose providence extends to every world that floats in space, if he does not come to me in my poverty and pain, is not the God who touches my heart or awakens the sympathies of my nature; neither does he touch the heart of the afflicted and the unfortunate. Evidences of God's sovereignty, magnificence and majesty are abundant, but the great cry of humanity is for sympathy and love: nothing else will satisfy the cravings of the soul.

"We pine for kindred natures to mingle with our own."

It is naught but infidelity, no matter under what guise it comes, that would withdraw God to a sphere beyond the sympathies of earth and sink us into unnoticeable minuteness, and cast the darkening shroud of oblivion over all the concerns of men. In opposition to all such doctrines we have the great facts of nature and the teachings of divine revelation. If we study the instincts of the lower animals we shall find parental affection predominating over every other instinct. This is true in all the series, from the lowest to the highest. The most timid will become brave and the instinctive love of life is held in abeyance by the instinctive love of offspring, so that they will expose themselves to death in defence of their young. But illustrations drawn from man in the same relation, where purest affection is conjoined with highest reason, are much more impressive. Laocoon of ancient Troy, when his two sons were enfolded in the deadly coils of a huge serpent, endeavored to rescue them, but failing, died in the attempt, and the most famous piece of statuary in existence commemorates the event. So we see even heathen virtue recognized and appreciated this inherent element of our nature, and classic art embodied it in marble that has withstood the ravages of many centuries.

After the battle of Gettysburg a soldier was found dead upon the field holding in his hand the likenesses of his three small children. This evidence of parental love awakened such an echo in the hearts of our countrymen that it led to the founding of the National Orphan Homestead at Gettysburg, where the children found a home and their mother became matron. This was a better embodiment of the idea of sympathy and affection than classic art could give, and shows the difference between the age of Homer and the dispensation of Christ.

The last affection that dies in the human heart is love for our children. Nay, it does not die: it is part of the constitution of the soul, and is as immortal as the soul itself. I know this sentiment finds a response in the heart of every parent; it is not isolated, but belongs to the race. And is not this the impress that God has left of his own nature upon his works? These outgoings of purity, virtue and affection from sentient beings are the thoughts and feelings of God embodied in the creation and nature of man.

There is nothing in literature more touchingly pathetic than David's lament for Absalom. Forgetful of his rebellion and his lack of filial affection David mourned him as a son. When the news of his death came, "The king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept; and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" The father was superior to the king. Parental affection lies deeper than regal robes, and dwells alike in the bosom of prince and peasant.

In seeking for evidences of God's sympathy with man we must come to divine revelation, the great source of information upon divine subjects. Promises and expressions that indicate nearness, sympathy and affection are found on every page. The believer and his Lord are one. "For thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." The broken heart never bleeds alone; it always secures the notice of God. Sometimes our faith fails, and we say, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me." But the Lord answers, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, she may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands." Isaiah lix. 15, 16. The mother may be so dead to the feelings of nature as not to heed her infant's cry for help, but God will not forget his children or let them cry in vain. He says, "Thy name is written upon my hand and when I stretch it out to help the needy, or support the weak, or wipe the tear from the mourner's cheek, I will remember thee. When I raise the fallen or bind up the broken heart I will not pass by thee. When I open my hand to scatter blessings on the earth, or stretch it forth to guide revolving suns in their movements, I see thy features upon it, not in lights and shadows, but engraven with instruments of iron upon Mount Calvary. I will never leave thee, I will never, never forsake thee."

The divine Being acknowledges the parental relation, and assumes toward us all the tenderness and sympathy that grows out of it. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust." The gift of the divine Son for our salvation is the great climax in the evidence of God's regard for man. The Son of God made one with the sons of men, and from motives of love and pity dying for their salvation. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." But Jesus laid down his life for his enemies. Jesus Christ is the manifestation of God to the world. He is the only visible, tangible evidence of God's special regard for us. God's providence operating through the laws of nature may satisfy our physical wants, but nature is cold and unsympathetic, and only responds to sacrifice and toil; but in Christ God draws near to us; we feel the warm impulses of his own nature. The life current of sympathy and love leaps

from the heart of God through Christ to us. Our souls are not orphaned from the divine Father, nor is the world wandering without a guide in the wilderness of space. If we would know God's relations to man we must find them in Jesus Christ. He is God in action, love and sympathy toward man. Christ and God are one in nature. "I and my Father are one." The tenderness and sympathy of Jesus are the tenderness and sympathy of God. As he loved, pitied and sympathized with men in the days of his flesh, so does God always. It is in Christ only that God in his gracious character is brought within the comprehension of man, and only through him can we obtain a knowledge of God that will satisfy the soul. No view of God that does not include Christ or that is not obtained through Christ will ever excite in the human bosom the feeling of love, confidence or satisfaction. If we stand beneath the deep recesses of the primeval forests, or in the shadow of the everlasting mountains, or by Niagara's falling flood, the soul will be inspired with awe and sublimity; but if we stand within the shadow of a simple cross the soul is inspired with love. It speaks to the heart of grace and salvation.

Look at Christ in his intercourse with men in circumstances to call out his pity. He comforted and fed the poor; he sustained the needy, and alleviated the sufferings of the unfortunate. "He bore our sicknesses and carried our sorrows." Words of cheer and promises of rest fell from his lips, and gracious help was extended by his hand. At his touch scales fell from the eyes of the blind, his word unstopped the ears of the deaf, he healed the sick, and to assuage the grief of human hearts he raised the dead. At the gate of the city of Nain he stopped the funeral cortege of the widow's son, raised the young man to life, and it is said with an exquisite touch of tenderness, "And he delivered him to his mother." When Jesus stood by the grave of Lazarus he mingled his tears with those of Mary and Martha. But wherefore did he weep? He knew that Lazarus would soon be restored to his friends, and their sorrow would be turned to joy. But Christ with omniscient eye looked up the ages and saw every open grave, and in those weeping sisters he saw represented every tearful eye and broken heart and smitten household, and the tears of Christ were a genuine outburst of sympathy, human and divine commingled, for human suffering and woe.

It was one of the promised prerogatives of the Messiah, "To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord that he might be glorified." Christ never loses his distinctive character. He is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever."

The scriptures teach that the sympathy of God is that of a father. Angelic interest in man is comforting and inspiring, but this is dearer and closer. Theirs is the sympathy of friends; at best but that of elder brothers; but the sympathy of God is that of father and mother combined. It is supposed the mother's heart is more tender and that she yearns over her offspring with greater affection than the father. It may be so, but we must not forget or ignore the mother nature in God. It certainly dwells in the bosom of the divine Being. "I have nourished and brought up children, but they have rebelled against me." "Can a woman forget her sucking child? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." The father does not forget his child though wandering from home forgetful of all filial obligations and absorbed in unprofitable pursuits, much less will he forget the dutiful and obedient. The mother bends, with anxious hope over the cradle of her babe and watches with fluttering heart the ebb and flow of life, listful to every wail and want.

But the sympathy and care of God is even more constant and unremitting. Weariness will overcome and tired nature must seek restoration in sleep, but "He that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep."

The sympathy of God is guided by infinite wisdom. "He knoweth our frame." It does not always bring relief from suffering. Not because God lacks the power to help us, but because he is infinitely wise. Pain may be permitted to continue for moral ends. We sometimes say, O Lord, take the suffering away. But God answers, "I will sustain thee. My grace shall be sufficient for thee. As thy days so shall thy strength be." If our life were the life of the beast merely, no doubt God would speedily relieve us. But there is in man a soul, and by discipline God designs to make us partakers of his holiness.

The weakness of our frame may give rise to thoughts and actions that appear to others reprehensible if not sinful, but God is wise to judge correctly. "He remembereth that we are dust." Often when through ignorance of our real condition, human sympathy is denied us, divine sympathy flows abundantly, and being divine it is infinite and more than commensurate with our wants. Human and divine sympathy is the same in nature, and is governed by the same law in manifestation.

The intensity of human sympathy bears some relation to nearness of kin. We feel the sorrows of other households, but not so keenly as those of our own. Suffering and death in other families will elicit our neighborly sympathy, but it is not as when our children suffer or die. Our whole souls go out in melting pity for them. But we are God's children if we love and obey him. We are adopted into his family, and are of the household of faith. And "as a father" will he watch and sympathize.

Our sympathy for the unfortunate bears some relation to our nearness to the scene of suffering. A famine in China or an earthquake in South America may excite a feeling of sorrow and a wish that they did not exist, but there is not the depth of feeling and interest there would be in case our immediate neighbors were dying of want, or the tidal wave had swept some city on our coast into the sea. But God is near to us; we are "made nigh by the blood of Christ." He knows our hearts and our homes; our sufferings are ever present with him. "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them and carried them all the days of old."

Human sympathy goes out toward the unfortunate and afflicted. When disease enters our dwelling and one of its inmates droops beneath its power, the affection and sympathy of all are concentrated in him. When by accident one becomes maimed or blind or otherwise injured, is not the wealth of love and compassion all lavished on him? When the angry billows surge and roar and the wild tempest sends from sea to land the heralds of its reign, our intensest thoughts go out to the voyager at sea. When the cannon's loud roar and the din and clash of arms betoken the fierce contest raging on the battle-plain, the first inquiry of parental love is like that of David, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" So it is with the sympathy of God. The suffering one is the object of his special solicitude and care. The one most afflicted, most forgotten, whose sun of prosperity has suddenly set in night, calls forth the profoundest pity from God. The widow struggling alone with adversity, the fatherless children thrown upon the charities of a cold world,

the neglected wife who bears in silence the bitterness of disappointed hope, the invalid shut in from labor while the children cry for bread; these awaken the tenderest sympathies in the bosom of God, and on their lot much thought is spent in heaven.

Jesus the Son of God, the High-Priest of our profession, though passed into the heavens, "is touched with a feeling of our infirmities." The thought of our nearness to him should be ever present with us. No poverty, no depth of obscurity can conceal us from his knowledge. Those sorrows that we would not divulge to our best friend are known to God, and it lightens the load and soothes the pain to know the everlasting arms of love and mercy are about us. The nearness of our relationship to the great Jehovah is inspiring. He is our Father, and all the love and pity growing out of the relationship will be cheerfully given. The bond of union between Christ and the believer is so close that the suffering and faith of men blend with the sympathy and love of God. The suffering saint, however isolated or whatever his condition may be, when he lifts his thoughts to God will find an answering sympathy.

"I think this passionate sigh, which half begun
I stifle back, may reach and stir the plumes
Of God's calm angel standing in the sun."

Certain it is that love, stronger than ever dwelt in human bosom, and sympathy more deep and tender than ever flowed from human heart, leap the vast profound between heaven and earth and bind the suffering soul to Christ, the source of his salvation and the object of his hope.

* * * * *

03 -- ANGEL MINISTRIES

Angels are men in lighter habit clad,
Nor are our brothers thoughtless of their kin;
Yet absent, but not absent from their love.
Michael has fought our battles; Raphael sung
Our triumphs; Gabriel on our errands flown,
Sent by the sovereign. -- young.

Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for
the sake of them that shall inherit salvation? -- Epistle to Hebrews.

God, who is infinite in wisdom and goodness, has created many orders of beings to enjoy life and behold his glory. It is evident that man occupies a middle place in the creative plan. There are many orders above and below us in the scale of life and intelligence. Of those below, science has revealed much. The microscope shows each leaf and drop of water to be a world of animated beings, and brings to the eye an infinitude of littleness.

Of those above us, we learn something by divine revelation. Man is the master-piece of God's work in this world -- the highest of all terrestrial beings. But in other spheres are other

beings of superior intelligence, grace, beauty, and purity, who, though in no sense earthly, hold an important but invisible relation to us.

Science has demonstrated the unity of the physical universe, and shown the dependence and mutual relations of each atom of matter; that one law governs the apple that falls from the tree, and the suns and planets that roll in the most distant realms of space. And have we not some reason to suppose that there are relations and dependencies among all the intelligences of creation? Those relations may be beyond our comprehension in this life, but we think the future will show that all the moral intelligences of the universe are, by some mysterious chain, bound together as securely as the physical universe is bound by the law of gravitation.

But what do we know of the relation which the higher orders of God's creatures sustain to man? They do not reveal themselves to our senses, only in exceptional cases, and science cannot project itself into the realm they occupy. But divine revelation, whose province it is to unfold what man could never know, has given some facts upon which we base our conceptions of angelic beings. It has also given some hints that are sublime as indicating their relations to us. The mind grasps with great satisfaction every word that is written in regard to them, and yet is unsatisfied. Who would not like to see them? Foremost of the sons of God, nearest the everlasting Father, highest in rank and greatest in mental capacity, sublimest in worship and most fervent in devotion, waving their wings of fire before the eternal throne. The interest we feel in them may arise from the fact that we believe in some way our destiny is connected with theirs, and that some time we may rise to the same plane of life and enjoyment.

The nature and history of angels, the relation they sustain to good men, or to the spirits of the just made perfect, are subjects of special interest to many, particularly those who by suffering or bereavement have been brought nigh to the spirit world. In the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the inspired writer tells some things in regard to them. He shows clearly that they are created beings, and therefore inferior to Christ. They are not to be worshipped as God or Christ is worshipped. They are ministers of God who delight to do his bidding. This chapter leaves us in no doubt as to their position and employment in the economy of grace. "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister unto them who shall be heirs of salvation?" Heb. i. 14. The more we understand of their nature, the better we shall understand and appreciate their ministries. They are spiritual beings. "Who maketh his angels spirits and his ministers a flame of fire." The Apostle said of Christ, "He took not upon him the nature of angels but the seed of Abraham." It is therefore clear that angels differ in nature from men. But that was said of the nature which Christ assumed, the earthly, physical nature, and does not imply that man may not in the future world be raised to the same plane of life and purity occupied by the angels. It is reasonable to suppose that they have bodies, not like ours, but highly refined, as bright as the light, and as subtile as flame, similar no doubt to the "spiritual bodies" of the saints after the resurrection. Christ said that the saints in the resurrection should be "as the angels of God in heaven," Matt. xxii. 30. A judicious and learned writer has said, "All the knowledge we have of angels is from revelation, and all the description it gives leads us to conclude that they are connected with the world of matter as well as with the world of mind, and are furnished with organical vehicles composed of some refined material substance suited to their nature and employment."

When we search the divine word for information, our thoughts run faster than revelation, and we often wish it would speak when it is silent. Are the angels the oldest of the sons of God? It is probable they are. Doubtless they were created long prior to man, or even before those long geologic periods which science assigns to the formation of the world. "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast Understanding.... When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" Job xxxviii. 4-7. Are these ministers of God and servants of the church great in number? Of this there can be no doubt. Daniel, speaking of the "ancient of days," said, "Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him." Again in David, "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels." Jesus said his Father could send more than twelve legions of angels for his defence." A multitude of the heavenly host "appeared and announced the Saviour's birth to the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem. Paul said, "But ye are come unto Mount Zion... to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born." All these passages are indefinite, but are designed to indicate large numbers. But what are finite numbers in comparison with infinite space? the vast domain of the eternal God, peopled with his creatures and crowded with the monuments of his power. These celestial beings are "all ministering spirits sent forth to minister unto them who shall be heirs of salvation." Of what vast value and importance is the welfare of the saints in the estimation of God! They are encircled by the heavenly powers. "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." Pa. xci. 11, 12. How close must be our connection with the spirit world! How vigilant the guardianship of angels! There is no poetic license in the declaration,

ôMillions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep."

How rich is the inheritance of God's people! How great the wealth of sympathy that is lavished upon them! The sympathy and ministry of angels are beautifully set forth in the vision of Jacob. The patriarch was fleeing from his angry brother, perhaps repentant, and seeking help and protection from God. Being weary, he lay upon the ground to sleep with a stone for a pillow, and God gave him a glorious vision. He saw a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending thereon.ö It is likely this was the time when God ratified the blessings which Jacob had obtained from Isaac, his father, and admitted him into the line of the progenitorship of the Messiah; and, therefore, he became an object of peculiar interest to the celestial inhabitants. But it indicates to us at least this truth, that heaven and earth are connected by the ministry of angels. Christ himself once withdrew the veil, and revealed to us the deep interest felt by the angels of God in the welfare of man. As the shepherd rejoices over the restoration of the wandering sheep, or the woman at the finding of the lost coin, "Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

The scriptures give many evidences of angelic sympathy, and show the part they take in the government of the world. In the olden time angel visits were not "few and far between." They came frequently with special messages from God. They may not now come for the same purpose: the sacred canon is complete, and we need nothing supplementary to the revelation of God. But under all dispensations angels have been employed to accomplish God's purposes of

justice, mercy, and love. Two angels came to Lot in Sodom, and said, "The Lord hath sent us to destroy this place." The first-born of Egypt, both of man and beast, was destroyed by an angel. An angel was sent to rout the Assyrian army, and in one night one hundred and eighty-five thousand were destroyed. Angels are ministers of God who do his pleasure with glad and willing hearts, whatever it may be; but we may presume that any work of mercy and love is more pleasurable to them than the execution of judgment, as it is more consonant with their nature and with the character of their Lord.

Angelic protection is frequently promised to the saints of the Most High, and these promises do not belong to anyone dispensation but to all. The king of Syria sent "a great host, and they came by night and compassed the city," where the prophet Elisha lived, in order to take him prisoner. "And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, a host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas! my master, how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and, said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." Daniel accounted for his wonderful deliverance, when cast into the lions' den, by angelic ministry. In answer to the king's inquiry as to the ability of the God whom he served to deliver him, he said, "O king, live forever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths that they have not hurt me."

Under the new dispensation we have many instances of a similar character. Peter was delivered from prison by an angel. Persecution for righteousness' sake had confined him within strong prison walls, and deprived him of the coveted companionship of the disciples of Christ. He slept between two Roman soldiers, and was bound with two chains. But what are Roman soldiers and iron chains when an angel of God beckons us onward? The angel touched the apostle and he arose: the fetters fell from his limbs a broken, shapeless mass. It was dark night, but no torch was needed; the glory of the angel lit up the prison corridors. The senses of the sentinels were held in ab~yance; the iron gate, moved by an unseen hand, swung back, and Peter was restored to liberty, and to the disciples who had been praying for his deliverance. When the word of God mightily prevailed in Jerusalem, and the apostles were put in the common prison, "the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life." How wonderful are the dealings of God with his people!

Often, when our hearts have been filled with fear, we have needed an Elisha to pray that our eyes may be opened, for if God should give us power to see spiritual objects, we would find the horsemen and chariots of the Lord all around us. Many of the providential deliverances wrought out for us by an unseen hand have been by the ministry of angels. Are we not often surprised by some narrow escape from danger? by some sudden warning given of impending calamity? In days of old, with a sublimer faith and a keener spiritual vision, God's servants would have seen an angel, or felt a consciousness of his presence; but in these days, in which the tendency is strong toward a materialistic faith, and a denial of the supernatural, men regard these things as only "remarkable coincidences." It is entirely consonant with scripture teaching to regard these deliverances as providential by the ministry of angels. I will relate an occurrence illustrative of this that came under my own obs~rvation. A mother and child lay sleeping, when,

by accident, a neighbor, at dead of night, fired his gun, loaded with buckshot, into the house. The charge entered the bed and riddled the clothes, but the sleepers were uninjured, and did not awake. In the morning, without knowledge of what had happened, the first words uttered by the mother were, "Another night is passed; æThe angel of the Lord encampeth around about them that fear him, and he delivereth them." It seems as if the divine One would have us know by whose agency the deliverance had been effected.

It is the province of angels to comfort those in distress. When Christ fought so fiercely with the tempter, and successfully foiled his wily foe, as the devil left him, "angels came and ministered unto him." It is often so with Christ's followers: having overcome, and seeing the tempter flee, they are filled with joy and comfort. Again, in the garden of Gethsemane, in the hour of the Saviour's mortal agony, forsaken of men, put to grief and bruised by the divine Father, as he drank the bitter cup, "There appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him." Perhaps no angel ever flew on swifter wing, or bore a message of love or comfort more gratefully. It was a service that the highest archangel must have coveted. When Paul was in danger of shipwreck on his way to Rome, he was comforted by an angel, who said, "Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee."

What cheer and comfort this contains for us! Besides the forces and instrumentalities that belong to earth and the sphere of human action, God has at his command for the exigencies of our temporal life heavenly and angelic agencies. We must not believe that angelic ministries all belonged to the past; angels are as active now as ever, but no inspired pen records their deeds. History tells of some. The martyr youth of the early church who bore his sufferings with heroic fortitude was asked what sustained him. He replied, "An angel stood by when my sufferings were at the worst, and pointed heavenward." They are now "ministering spirits." We may see no light, "hear no sound, and yet be under their influence. Our senses are not adapted to angelic or heavenly communications, but to the inner consciousness of the believer they make themselves known and felt.

"Times of joy and times of woe
Each an angel presence know."

In times of danger they protect, casting about us an invisible shield, warding off the darts of the wicked one, and guiding our feet, unconsciously to us, from the snares set in our path. In times of woe they strengthen, though not perceived by the senses. Acting as messengers of God we know not how great or important their agency.

The Christian soul chastened and subdued by affliction and bereavement may expect angelic sympathy, especially when sorrowing for the dead. While Mary lingered by the sepulchre of Jesus weeping, as she wept she stooped down and looking in beheld "two angels sitting one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain." Angels are oftenest visible through human tears. Jacob's vision was given when his head lay upon "a stone for a pillow." It is from hard trials and stony griefs that we are lifted high enough to commune with angels. When we look into the tomb that has swallowed our most cherished hopes and dearest earthly joys, we may see celestial beings who will say, "Why seek ye the living among

the dead? "Thus we are taught by the angels that those whom we mourn as dead, and seek among the graves, are not there. The nobler, better part, that loved and was loved, has gone. Liberated from the conditions that bound them to earth, they have, through the grave, emerged into life, and stand with the angels who have never known and never shall know death.

We too often rob ourselves of the comfort this is designed to give by unbelief; by materializing and explaining away the supernatural. If angels were so far beyond us in nature and capacity as to have nothing in common with men, we should lose all interest in them, and they would be undesirable as companions. It is the thought of their sympathy with us and their kindred to us that make them objects of special interest. Father Taylor, of Boston, an able but eccentric preacher, when dying was addressed thus, "There's sweet rest in heaven." "Go there if you want to," said the old man. The friend persisted, "Think of the angels that will welcome you." "What do I want with angels? I want folks; but," he added, "angels are folks," and the thought seemed to comfort him. Yes, angels are folks; not so far removed in nature, capacity or tastes as to be unfit associates for man. They are elder brothers whose delight it will be to unravel to us the deep mysteries of past eternity, and bring to us a knowledge of the vast regions of outlying space, whither their swift and tireless wings have borne them.

Another important office is performed by the angels toward the church on earth. They are sent to conduct the souls of the departed dead to their heavenly and eternal home. This is not conjecture. "And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." So doubtless it is with all the children of God. We can know nothing of the locality of heaven, and the pathway thither to us is an untrodden one, but the soul is not left a stranger and wanderer in the wilderness of space, but angels bear it to its heavenly home. The infant departing from its mother's bosom loses naught in tenderness or love in the exchange from parental to angelic arms. Age, in its decrepitude leaning upon a stronger arm, loses nothing in care or kindness in the exchange from filial to angelic guidance. The facts of experience attest the teachings of scripture. The saints of God often speak of it. The writer once attended the funeral of a young man and learned the following facts in relation to his death. He was sick for months, having returned from the battle-fields of his country in an emaciated condition. Some weeks before he died he said an angel came and conversed with him, saying, "When it is the Master's will I will come for you." One day when conversing with friends he suddenly ceased to speak, and looking toward the window as though attracted by some unusual sight, he exclaimed, "My angel has come," and at once sunk upon his pillow and expired. But a few days from this writing a young lady, intelligent and finely educated, moving in the first ranks of society, fell sick of diphtheria. When her attendants were applying some outward application, she said, "Put it where George held his hand," but said one, "Your brother George is dead: he died a year ago." "I understand that," she said, "but George is here, and has been for some hours, and held my shoulder and soothed the pain." Some time afterward she rose in the bed and stretching her arms out, she exclaimed, "Now, my dear brother George, you have come for me and I will go with you," and at once the spirit took its flight. Say not that this is imagination, the wild phantasy of disordered minds: it accords well with God's truth.

"To children, and saintly women and gifted sages, the vision of Stephen is repeated in wondrous variety and fulness. Even before they enter through the veil the life beyond envelops them in its lustre, and words of farewell are lost in speeches and looks addressed to the unseen

(by us) multitudes who have come to welcome them home. Unbelief scouts such revelations. Let it. The belief of them is precious to the instincts and best reason and most lustrous faith of the purest and wisest spirits that ever have graced or do now grace the earth. If, as appears from express revelation, and from reason as well, the doctrine is true that man is a spirit; that there is a great spiritual universe; that the good and holy are a divine brotherhood; that flesh and blood are the walls of separation between this and that; that death opens a door into its glory, and that the spiritual consciousness is quickened and heightened on its entrance; and, in fact, that life is a journey to its felicities; why not such experiences in the dying moment? When the spirit reaches its goal, when it comes to the line where two worlds meet, when it is, in fact, almost through and over, why not wave farewells and greetings to those on this and that side as it passes the river? Personally I have seen too much to doubt. I no more dare disbelieve than I can question my own present consciousness." -- Bishop Foster -- Life Beyond the Grave, p. 143.

So long as the constitution of nature remains as God made it, and the laws and affinities of moral intelligences remain as God made them, so long will the supernatural be interwoven with our present being. As we approach the eternal city the veil that hangs between us and the spirit world becomes attenuated, and the sight of dying saints may pierce it. Many of them, standing on the verge of both worlds, have caught glimpses of the glory beyond, have seen familiar faces and heard the songs of the redeemed.

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04 -- LIGHT IN THE VALLEY

This is the bud of being, the dim dawn,
The twilight of our day, the vestibule;
Life's theatre as yet is shut, and Death,
Strong death, alone can heave the massy bar,
This gross impediment of clay remove,
And make us embryos of existence free! -- Young.

For we must needs die. -- Bible.

Death is a reaper whose sickle leaves no sheaf ungathered; a prince whose power over this world is absolute, and whose mandate all must obey. It therefore comes home to the heart of every intelligent human being as the most solemn of all events connected with our history in time. The man who never thinks of death and its solemnities is lost to moral sensibility, and is dead while he lives.

The views and feelings with which death is regarded are diverse. Some fear it, others court it; some have spiritualized it into an angel, others have degraded it into a monster. "The rhetorician's art has subjoined to it the idea of personification, while the poet's imagination has lent him his meagre aspect and his naked bones." Death is not what most men think it is. Our natural fear and dread of death, and our distorted imagination, will cause us to clothe it in the most unsightly robes.

"Man makes a death which nature never made,
Then on the point of his own fancy falls;
And feels a thousand deaths in fearing one."

When death is disrobed of all the trappings of fancy, and all the features imparted by fear, and is viewed in the light of revelation, it loses its ghastly appearance. But fear of death is natural to man. There are but few who have attained that firmness of moral courage where fear or dread of physical death does not exist. Much effort has been made to divest men of this. Philosophers have grappled with it, even those who have known nothing of the Christian faith. But all efforts have failed to remove it; death has still reigned, and men have been in bondage all their lifetime through fear of death. We have known some of the most devout men of God, who, while they triumphed in view of the glorious reward that awaited them, still had a natural dread of death. We do not like to handle a serpent, even though its sting is drawn. Did not even Christ share in this? "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save him from death." His prayers in Gethsemane were offered in such perfect resignation to the divine will that they were heard approvingly, though the deliverance asked for was not and could not be granted. "And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him."

Among theologians death is said to consist in the separation of soul and body. By others it is more accurately said that death does not consist in this separation, but that the separation is the consequence of death. The body, by accident or disease, is stricken down, becomes motionless, and can no longer perform any of its functions; it is therefore useless as a medium for the soul's operations, and is left as a tenement that has crumbled into ruins.

It will be of interest to look at death from the standpoint of the Scriptures. The Old Testament speaks of death as "a return to the dust." "For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." This shows the end of the physical system and the destiny of the soul. The one returns to its mother earth and is dissolved to its original elements, and the other returns to the Father of spirits. "Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled; thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to the dust." Both in the Old and New Testaments the body is not unfrequently compared to a tent or house, and the soul as the occupant. This tent is represented as taken down or destroyed, while the soul moves on to another house or mode of existence. Paul says, "For we know that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." In the same connection Paul speaks of death as the unclothing of one's self, laying aside the body as a garment; and the soul as being clothed upon with its house which is from heaven.

Sleep is also frequently used by the inspired writers to denote death. "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." "She is not dead, but sleeping." Thus Christ spoke of his friend at Bethany and of the ruler's daughter. So Paul spoke of the witnesses of Christ's resurrection. "Some are fallen asleep." "Fallen asleep in Christ." The primitive Christians represented death by the same figure, perhaps, more frequently than in any other way. The rude inscriptions and symbolic figures found in the catacombs of Rome speak of "sleeping in Christ," and "sleeping in the peace of God." The figure of sleep is a very appropriate one with which to represent death. When

weary and worn we regard sleep as the most desirable condition. We lie down to rest confident that we shall awake refreshed for the duties of life. May we not lie down in death confident that we shall awake to a new life, prepared for duties and enjoyments in another sphere? May not our flesh rest in hope, believing that the body shall rise again in the morning of the resurrection?

In the Bible and in the writings of the primitive Christians, death is spoken of as "a departure," a "going away." Paul said, "having a desire to depart to be with Christ." "I am now ready to be offered, the time of my departure is at hand." The figure is now used by the devout. A young lady, speaking of the decease of her mother, said: "Our mother went out from us ten years ago." It is pleasant to think of our friends as having gone to another home, or into another room of our Father's mansion, to another place of life and enjoyment. One of our Sunday school scholars died recently. She comforted her widowed mother by saying: "I am going to another home; do not cry for me; I am going to Jesus to live with him, and dear papa and brother; they'll be glad to see me coming. I will think of you when I am in my glory home." By these beautiful figures the scriptures rob death of its terrors, and inspire the human heart with hope. In this they differ from sceptical philosophy. Epicurus undertook to relieve men of the fear of death by representing that there is nothing beyond death, which to many minds would be the most fearful calamity that death could bring; the utter extinction of being. Jesus Christ gives us an eternal life.

"Death is the problem of the ages. Life is according to visible and working law. Not so death:ö -- G. Haven. It seems like an intervention, an arrest of that which has almost infinite possibilities. In regard to the origin of death, the record of inspiration is this: "Sin entered into the world, and death by sin." We understand this to apply to human death. The scriptures assure us that man was at first placed, conditionally, under the law of life. But we cannot suppose that even in man's innocence in Eden the thought of death was unknown to him. "Must not the revolving year have been marked by the opening and fall of earth's foliage; and the ripening, consumption, and decay of earth's fruitage? It is certain from the discoveries of science that animal, vegetable, and insect life was subject to the law of death before the creation of man, and must have been evident to our first parents in paradise. While this fact was present to them, it must have given a clear conception of their privileges and their obligations to the Creator, who had made them an exception by placing them under the law of life. And it must have been an additional incentive to obedience when the law was given them, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." By the death that reigned around them they could obtain an idea of the magnitude of the evil threatened.

It is evident from the original covenant made with man that God designed he should not die. "The threatening of death as the penalty of a breach of the covenant is rightly understood to imply the promise of deathless and incorruptible life so long as the covenant should stand. And the tree of life in the midst of the garden, if not by its physical virtue the means of perpetual renovation, was certainly the sacramental pledge of God's purpose to preserve life inviolate, while man was steadfast to the covenant. Thus runs the tenor of the covenant, or constitution, under which man's life was originally given and held: 'Thou shalt not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.' And in terms equally explicit to the transgression of the law is the entrance and reign of death over man

ascribed: 'By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. -- McClintock. The preservation of man from death in a state of innocence would not be more wonderful than the preservation of the angels in immortal life, and requires no greater watch-care of Divine Providence than is indicated in the words of Christ: "But the very hairs of your heads are all numbered." Having a soul unstained by sin, and a body perfect, as it came from the hand of its Creator, with free access to the tree of life, which, whatever it was, was intended to supply all the wastes of physical life, and under the care of an ever watchful providence, man must have been immortal, for these are the conditions of immortality.

If sin be the cause of death, the question will arise, was this world designed to be man's permanent home? Of this we have no record, but we incline to the opinion that it was not. There are evident indications in man's mental and spiritual constitution that he was designed for a higher and nobler sphere. He was possessed of powers that could never find scope for exercise in this world, and these powers without a scope for exercise would be as much out of place as the wings of a bird without a sphere in which to fly. But if God designed to bring man in his primeval state to a more extended field of action and thought, there were other ways known to infinite wisdom without the dissolution of the body. The case of Enoch and Elijah are illustrations. "Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him." And Elijah went up to heaven" in a chariot of fire." In these God has given us illustrations of what he could do for men, purifying and rendering them capable of immediate translation. In this way man without sin could have been raised to a higher state of being without death. The change experienced by these men of God was equivalent to that which will be experienced by the saints in death and the resurrection. But in its essential features it was not death; there was no decay of bodily powers, no disruption of the relation between body and soul, no departure from the earthly house, no lying down to sleep, but a translation from earth to heaven; and in the transition such a change as God in his wisdom saw was necessary for the new sphere into which they were removed.

But we are now subject to death. "It is appointed unto man once to die." And death comes to us under the remedial plan. Though a part of the penalty attached to the breach of the Edenic covenant, it was not rescinded when the Saviour was promised. But we know that God is merciful and kind, not malevolent and vindictive in nature. His judgments upon the impenitent may be severe, but his goodness and mercy in Christ Jesus our Lord are infinite toward those that love him and keep his commandments. We have reason to believe that even death, as administered by a merciful God, may have its ministry of good. There must be a brighter side than that which commonly appears. The ghastly ruins wrought by the fell destroyer must have an antidote, a compensation which call be seen from some standpoint of truth; and it must be our endeavor to find it.

Man is now sinful and degraded, and that which would have been suited to a sinless state would be unsuited to his present fallen condition. Taking men as they are there is no doubt but "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," is a wise and just decree. The fact that God has chosen it is presumptive evidence that it is best for the interests of man. In many instances, in God's dealings with us, he has brought victory from defeat, and made the wrath of man to praise him. So in this instance God has brought good out of evil, and made death subserve our highest welfare by making it the pathway to eternal glory.

Man, before the fall, must have been the representative of all that was beautiful, great and good in the creature. Erect and graceful in form, comprehensive in mental endowments and high in moral attributes. Happiness, purity and perpetual youth were written upon his brow. But in our present state man is the synonym for depravity, imbecility and decrepitude. The most advanced in intelligence are but children relatively. Sir Isaac Newton, one of the greatest minds, said, in regard to knowledge, "I am but a child playing along the strand with a few pebbles, while the vast ocean of truth lies before me."

So deeply seated and radical are the evils entailed upon us by sin, they could not be overcome and at the same time conserve the highest interests of the race; and God in his infinite wisdom determined to destroy the body by death, and rear a new and more glorious one for the soul's occupancy.

The vast sum of eternal truth that lies around us cannot be discovered by the human mind in its present state. There is an infinity of mystery around, above, beneath us, and we cannot grasp it because of the hindrances and barriers imposed upon us by our present condition. The mind may not have reached its maximum of strength or its utmost limit of power, but its limitations are positive and peremptory: thus far shalt thou go and no farther. In our present state of sin and consequent physical and mental weakness, with no hope of a translation, death becomes necessary to the full development of our mental and moral nature. An impulse in the direction of a greater development is given us in the experimental knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord. The power of the Holy Ghost is quickening to the human mind. It brings a new class of ideas and emotions, new views of God, of heaven and our relations to the universe, new desires and aspirations which can find their complement only in God.

Death, or a change equivalent to it, becomes a necessity to our full development, because the present world is unsuited to the immortal capacities of the mind. God created man with a wonderful capacity for knowledge. We have evidence of this in his mighty achievements under adverse circumstances. Witness his improvements in the arts and sciences. How he takes hold of the latent but tremendous forces of nature, and makes them subserve his interests. He sends his messages upon the wings of the lightning, creates steam and applies it in a thousand varied forms. He delves to the bowels of the earth and brings up its treasures, and rides as swiftly as if the clouds were his chariot. In the rocks and stones of the earth he reads the history of creation, and points out its successive epochs. He looks abroad into space and ranges in thought its vast regions, filled with the splendors of the Deity and crowded with the monuments of his power. Measures and weighs the heavenly bodies, counts their number and calls their names. Discovers the subtile force that binds the universe in one, accounts for the varied phenomena of the celestial orbs, and reveals to his fellow-man the great thoughts of God as they are embodied in the material universe. Nature, providence and grace are the subjects of his research and the themes of his song, and when he has pursued these to the utmost limit of his ability and crowds upon the barriers that stand between him and eternity, he still sighs for advancement. His thirst for knowledge is insatiable, for God has given him desires as boundless as the universe and lasting as eternity. This world is too limited for the full exercise and development of such vast powers. Gladly would the mind soar from world to world were it not trammelled by a gross,

material body; but until death it is confined to the narrow limits of this sphere, which is but an atom in the great creation of God.

The medium also through which the mind operates becomes so much impaired that it cannot show its full strength or reach its highest possible attainment. The mind is unaffected by age, spirit knows nothing of decay, but the medium through which it touches and affects the outer world is soon worn and blunted by age and use. The avenues of sense become clogged or blocked up, and the intercourse of the mind with the world becomes imperfect. The brain softens and mental action becomes weak and childish. The eye becomes dim and the ear heavy, the limbs totter, the hand forgets its cunning, and the whole frame is feeble and emaciated. The mind is often clear and strong as ever, while the house of its tabernacle is crumbling into dust. The soul is majestic, though the body be in ruins. Thomas Carlyle's mind was yet unclouded when his hand became paralyzed by the use of the pen; he then learned to write with his left hand until that too forgot its cunning. But when no longer able to hold a book he read much, and his mind, unimpaired, communed with great authors, living and dead. If the soul were freed from incumbrances and given a medium as perfect as itself, it would remain strong and active, unaffected by the lapse of ages.

The body we have now is unsuited to the future glory, as that is revealed in the word of God. The eye is dazzled by the noonday sun, much less could it endure the "exceeding great and eternal weight of glory."

ôHeaven's fuller effluence mocks our dazzled sight,
Too great its swiftness and too strong its light."

We must be "clothed upon with our house which is from heaven," and put on robes more refined before we can appear in the presence of the "blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen or can see." We have illustrations of the effect of divine glory on man recorded in the scriptures. When Moses approached the visible manifestations of God's presence on Mount Sinai, he was sustained by miraculous power." The sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire," and he said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." When Isaiah entered the temple, beheld the glory of the Lord and heard the responsive cry of the seraphim, he uttered this affecting complaint: "Woe is me, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." When Christ was transfigured, "His face did shine like the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." While Peter was congratulating himself and desiring to make the place a permanent abode for the whole company, a bright light overshadowed them and increased the weight of glory, and a voice proceeded from the cloud, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The disciples were dismayed at the voice and dazzled with the glory, "and they fell on their face and were sore afraid." In these instances we see the weakness of human nature when brought in contact with the glory of the Lord.

The Scriptures also give illustrations of the strength and glory of those who have passed through the change of death or translation. Elijah in his glorified humanity, and Moses in his disembodied state, both are able to look upon the ineffable glory of the Deity without a dimming

veil. So shall we when we have passed through the valley of the shadow of death and have entered upon our future state of existence. In the transfiguration the veil was withdrawn, heaven came down to earth and we get a glimpse of the state of the glorified. We know not that Moses is an exception to the great multitude of the saved, including our own loved ones who have escaped to celestial habitations. We have no reason to suppose he differs from other happy souls who await the resurrection, either in the nature of his powers or the character of his glory. But this glory is withheld from those in the flesh, "For we must needs die," "For flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God."

When the soul is cleansed by the blood of Christ, it receives a new impulse in the direction of goodness and immortality. It longs for perfect purity in its nature and surroundings; pure associations, objects of sight, pursuit and enjoyment. It longs for the time when it shall be unfettered and can bask in the sunlight of God's face. These can never be enjoyed in this life. The soul must burst its fetters and rise to a higher plane of existence before it can find full scope for its powers, or associations and surroundings adapted to its nature.

There are many mysteries that cannot be solved here. The lover of natural scenery, while in the valley, fails to see the beauties that are around him. His sweep of vision is too contracted; he can only see the hillsides that hem him in, or here and there a mountain painted against the sky. The effect of hill and dale, of the deep ravine and tall mountain peak, the forest and stream, and the relation of all to the harmony of the landscape are undiscovered, until he ascends some tall eminence from which to look, with unobstructed vision, upon the broad field of beauty that lies before him. So we must find some higher stand-point than this earth from which to view the events of time in order to understand their true relations. This will be found when the spirit is disembodied. When eternity with its infinite possibilities lies before us, we shall find it the adequate interpreter of all the mysteries of time. "What thou knowest not now thou shalt know hereafter."

In all the dealings of God with man his attributes are wonderfully displayed: his justice in the execution of the penalty of the broken law; his holiness in the abhorrence with which he regards sin; his wisdom and mercy in devising and executing a plan of redemption for soul and body, and making even the result of transgression the medium through which the soul escapes to a higher life. Should not these considerations reconcile us to the fact of death? When the blood of Christ has washed us from all sin, and we are free from its consequences, we may rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and with Simeon say, "Now, Lord, let test thou thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

If I can know nothing of God's immense universe beyond the narrow limits of the globe on which I live, without dying, I am reconciled to death. Let me lay aside this heavy clay, and my spirit be in some lighter habit clad, in which I may fly from world to world and see and investigate the stupendous works of my Creator. Can I never enjoy the purity for which I sigh, in association and surroundings, without dying? Then let me pass through the dark valley and enter the sinless regions beyond. Can I never have a more perfect medium for mental operations than I now possess in this frail body, racked with pain and subject to weakness? Then let me exchange it for that which is indestructible. If I cannot know the mysteries of my being and my relations to the universe while in the body, then I would gladly escape where I shall no longer

"see through a glass darkly, but face to face, and know even as also I am known." If death shall perform this ministry for me, I gladly welcome it in God's own time. If by death I can be removed from the law of death under which I was placed by sin, and be brought under the law of life that reigns in heaven, then let me die.

ôCease, fond nature, cease thy strife,
And let me languish into life."

Christianity alone can teach us the true ministry of death. False philosophy and infidelity attempt to relieve the mind of fear by saying that death ends all; but how blank and cheerless is such unbelief! it does not find one sympathetic chord in the human heart. Infidelity wrote over the gate of the far-famed cemetery, that overlooks from its mournful brow the gay and crowded metropolis of France, "Death is an eternal sleep." How blighting to human hopes, how desolating to human affections, is the influence of such unbelief! Pass beneath the portals of that city of the dead and let the full effect of atheism be felt, and the soul that under the influence of truth will expand with thought, glow with hope and burn with holy desire, will shrink and shrivel as the opening flower in the breath of frost or fire.

A traveller speaks thus of the inscriptions upon the grave-stones: "I read on those cold marble tombs the lamentations of bereavement, in every affecting variety of phrase. On the tomb of youth it was written, æIts broken-hearted parents, who spent their days in tears and their nights in anguish, had laid down here their treasure and their hope.' On the proud mausoleum, where friendship, companionship, love, had deposited their holy relics, it was constantly written, æHer husband inconsolable;Æ æHis disconsolate wife; 'A brother, left alone and unhappy,' has raised this monument; but seldom, so seldom that scarcely ever did the mournful record close with a word of hope; scarcely at all was it to be read amidst the marble silence of that world of the dead that there is a life beyond; and that surviving friends hope for a blessed meeting again where death comes no more." O. Dewey.

How fitful and uncertain are the hopes inspired by that scepticism which admits the possibility of life beyond the grave, but spurns divine revelation and ignores salvation by Jesus Christ. Its adherents believe "that happiness is the only good; reason the only torch; justice the only worship; humanity the only religion; and love the only priest," and thus they deny to God a place in his own universe. But when death comes to their immediate circle and lays its hand on those whom they love, how earnestly they cry for help! how they grope in the dark for those very hopes which Christ has made as bright as the sun and as firm as the pillars of eternity. One of them has recently said in beautiful and touching language, which betokens a hunger of soul which nothing but Christ can satisfy: "Life is a narrow vale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities. We strive in vain to look beyond the heights. We cry aloud, and the only answer is the echo of our wailing cry. From the voiceless lips of the unreplying dead there comes no word; but in the night of death Hope sees a star, and, listening, Love can hear the rustling of a wing." -- R. Ingersoll. Why listen for a voice from the unreplying dead when God has spoken? Why search the tomb by the light of the torch of human reason when light which is the life of men has come to us from the eternal world? Why prefer a flickering taper and ignore the sun? The taper's light will be extinguished by the first breeze created by the death-angel's wing, for we stand amazed, confounded, overwhelmed, in the presence of death, if we stand not on the rock of

God's eternal truth. Christianity comes to us in our sin and darkness with all the assurance of positive knowledge, with all the tenderness of pity, with all the help of omnipotence, and with all the authority of God. It smooths our path way to the grave, it lights up the dark valley with its beams of truth, and rescues humanity from the dominion of death.

Hope does indeed behold a star whose light shall never fade, which knows no setting; and love and faith hear the rustling of the angel's wing sent to guide the departing soul to realms of light. Death comes to the good as a friend to open the gate that leads to the spirit land. Then welcome death, "Great hour of answer to life's prayer, that breaks asunder the bond of life's mystery; hour of release from life's burden, and of reunion with the loved and lost! What mighty hopes hasten to their fulfilment in thee! O death! the Christian's death! What art thou but the gate of life, the portal of heaven, the threshold of eternity." -- O. Dewey.

Christ has conquered death, it has lost its power, its sting is extracted, its venom gone. It is chained as a captive to the conqueror's chariot wheels, and only awaits the resurrection morning to receive the execution of the sentence, "O death, I will be thy plagues! O grave, I will be thy destruction."

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05 -- THE HOPE OF THE RESURRECTION

The blessed in the new covenant Shall
rise up quickened, each from his grave,
Wearing again the garments of the flesh,
Ministers and messengers of life eternal. -- Blair.

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.-Paul.

The doctrine of the resurrection comes to the human heart as assurance of help to a beleaguered garrison, inspiring and invigorating, a prophecy of deliverance from the bondage of death and the consummation of the dearest hopes that ever lived in the soul of man.

If we give to death the attributes of personality, he comes to our homes as a rude and heartless invader, despoiling them of every ornament of beauty, leaving nothing but a desert waste. He comes as a murderer, lays his icy hand on those we love and they wither at his touch. He is cruel and treacherous, knows naught of pity or compassion, and is alike deaf to the appeals of infancy or age. But when every human being shall have been brought under his power, then Christ shall subvert and overthrow him. Death himself shall die, and his empire shall be annihilated by the resurrection of the dead. What joy shall burst forth from the lips of the redeemed, standing in holy triumph amidst the ghastly ruins of death's dominion! Bt. Paul by anticipation stands over the prostrate foe and shouts to him and his empire, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." We may now have such faith in Christ as shall take the sting from death, and make the victory of the grave so barren as to lose its significance. While we are subject to death and the grave for a time, we are assured of final victory. The sublime doctrine of the

resurrection, as the consummation of redemption, is left as a precious legacy by Christ to his church.

There is in man's nature an undertone that cries out for a resurrection. The tenderness we feel for the dead is both reasonable and instinctive. It is significant of some inherent value in the body; that it may again be needed, that the cold and lifeless clay may again be animated by that spirit which once gave it those attributes of grace that called forth the inmost affections of our souls. With what a depth of love we look upon the forms of our dead! How we cling to them! how beautiful they look to us! how carefully we handle them, and with what intensity the soul yearns over them when they are laid in the grave! How precious is the spot where they sleep! We plant flowers upon the grave that they may bloom in all the summer months, and the hand that plucks them is accounted rude and thoughtless. We seem to say, Let the flowers bloom and beautify the spot where the dead are laid: it is sacred; let the rose blush and shed its fragrance; let the lily bloom in purity there, for that is "God's acre," the resting-place of the bodies of his saints that shall awake in the resurrection. This instinctive feeling is not peculiar to those reared under the influence of Christian truth; it is as old as the race. What costly preparation was made in ancient Egypt to embalm the bodies of the dead that they should remain for many generations. What costly monuments were reared to mark their burial-places! They have stood for thousands of years, and remain to-day almost unaffected by the elements or the lapse of time. The Pyramids of Egypt, the ancient urns of many nations, the records of the generations who died before Christ brought life and immortality to light, the warm, throbbing instinct of every human heart, declare impressively the yearnings of the race for a restoration of their dead.

We select for our burial-places the most pleasant spots, the green hill-side facing the sun, so that the first beams of light may fall upon the grave. We love to visit those places, and we experience a melancholy pleasure in communing with the dead, and are not satisfied unless they have the most pleasant surroundings. Professor Caldwell, when dying, said to his sorrowing wife: "When you visit the spot where I lie, do not go in the shade of evening, or in the dark night; these are no times to visit the grave of the Christian; but go in the morning, in the bright sunshine, and when the birds are singing." This is the language of Christian hope. The grave is only the resting-place of that which shall some day be aroused, and the reclining body shall stand again according to the word of the Lord. In these things we see premonitions of a resurrection; not proofs, but indications of what God designs to do for us.

When we stand in the cemetery we are impressed with the thought that death reigns around us; but there is life as well as death. There are analogies in nature that are indicative of a resurrection. Those flowers we see blooming are the products of the tiny seed cast into the soil a few months ago. The vital energy was in the seed, but the flower could not be produced but by the dissolution of the seed. In reference to his own death Christ said: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." And so the apostle Paul said: "That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die." The casting of the seed into the ground is not a waste; it is not lost. "Human death is not annihilation; something of the old passes over from the former state, and stands out again in a new and more perfect state of maturity, and the two are identified in one individuality"². Not that the body is as a seed that shall germinate and develop a new body by any process of nature; the resurrection is not

natural, but supernatural -- a most stupendous miracle. It is no process of life under law, but a miracle produced by the fiat of Almighty God.

Again: See that beautiful lily, as white as the driven snow, blooming upon the grave over which you bend in sorrow: from whence did it come? You took an unsightly root or bulb and planted it in the dark soil, and there came up that beautiful flower. By what power was it produced? By the power of God, and no philosopher can describe the process. So in the fulness of time by God's own power shall there come from these graves, where rest the unnumbered dead, bodies that are indestructible in nature, and, in the case of the righteous, bodies that are fashioned like unto the glorious body of the Son of God.

Again: See that butterfly as it flits from flower to flower, basking in the sunshine, enjoying its short life, the symbol of gayety and beauty. What singular changes have taken place in its different stages of life! It was I not always a butterfly. There have been transformations from a lower to a higher development. It was once a worm, crawling from leaf to leaf, but it made for itself a tomblike encasement and passed into a chrysalis form and lay in torpor, but at the time the God of nature had ordained it emerged again into a higher form of life with augmented beauty, and plumed its wings for aerial flights and was prepared for new experiences which it could not have entered upon before, any more than man, before death and the resurrection, can enter upon the glories of the celestial life.

Our bodies may be as the seed, which shall be sown in the grave and so disappear for a while, but out of which we shall come forth, and God shall give us such bodies as may please him. We may enter upon our chrysalis state, but in God's own time we shall burst the bonds that bind us and come forth to everlasting life. But the flower and butterfly are emblems too faint to convey correct ideas of man in the resurrection state. We shall be like the pure and spotless bride, with new and brilliant attire, going forth to meet the bridegroom; like suns on the fourth day of creation starting out from dark nature's chaotic wilderness; like the Son of God transfigured, with garments white as the light and shining like the sun. And these glories, in contrast with the dark background of death's disrupted empire, shall show the power, wisdom and goodness of God.

We do not present these analogies as proofs; they are but faint emblems. The resurrection is an epoch in the destiny of man; a fact that awaits the race; that philosophy could not suggest or science discover, and for which nature has no absolute proof. But the analogies named are intimations of God's intentions, and they show that the resurrection of the dead is in harmony with God's thoughts as revealed in the economy of nature. But these would never satisfy the demands of science or of faith; we must have something more clear and solid. They are corroborations only, and we look for a solid foundation in the revelation of God.

The doctrine is stated in the Bible with great clearness and force. There are passages in the Old Testament in which it is found; the prophets of old were not without hope of a complete victory over death and the grave. The passages from the Old Testament that bear upon this subject are the following: "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth;

"And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

"Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins shall be consumed within me." -- Job xix. 25,26,27.

Modern criticism will scarcely allow this passage to hold the place it has held as a support of the doctrine of the resurrection. But there is something in it peculiarly forceful and touchingly beautiful. We are glad to know that all the best scholarship does not interpret it as only applicable to a restoration of Job to temporal prosperity. We give the following translation and comment from a late learned divine, Dr. Taylor Lewis, whose scholarship in the ancient Hebrew was scarcely less than any man of his day:

"I Know That My Redeemer Lives,
And O'er My Dust, Survivor Shall He Stand;
My Skin All Gone Ths [Remnant] They May Rend,
But From My Flesh Shall I Eloah See;
Shall See Him Mine:
Mine Eyes Shall See Him -- Strangbr Now No More."

"It is a question of subordinate importance whether in this passage of Jpb there is taught dogmatically the resurrection of the body, as held in our Christian articles, or whether there is only the thought of a spiritual beholding of the divine presence, æThe power of an endless life,' a true resurrection power is in it; and we may therefore regard the spirit of the words as expressed in these lines of the unpretending hymnist, that may be found engraved in so many of our rural burying-grounds:

"ÆGod my Redeemer lives,
And ever from the skies
Looks down and watches o'er my dust,
Till he shall bid it rise.

ôThough greedy worms devour my skin,
And gnaw my wasting flesh;
Yet he will build my bones again,
And clothe them all afresh.

"ÆThen shall I see my Saviour's face,
With strong immortal eyes,
And feast upon his unknown grace,
With rapture and surprise'ö3

The above passage from Job deserves special attention in this connection because it has been so long regarded as Job's declaration of faith in the resurrection of the dead. It is found in the burial service of nearly all churches, and has brought comfort to the hearts of millions. It is by no means necessary to the establishment of the doctrine, yet we cling to it as embodying the

sublime idea of life beyond the grave, and of intense satisfaction and joy in beholding God in the world to come.

There are passages in the Psalms of David that point to this great doctrine: "But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave; for he shall receive me." Isaiah and Daniel are explicit, and distinctly foreshadow what was "brought to light" by the gospel: "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust." "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament: and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever."

The great truths that pertain to the destiny of man dawned slowly upon the human mind. God did not choose to reveal clearly all the truth to the prophets; the new dispensation was the outgrowth and consummation of the old; and as prophecy drew nearer to the times of the Messiah, it became more definite and clear. The resurrection was no exception to this rule; it was but dimly seen. But in the teachings of Christ and his apostles, the mists flee away; and that which was but vaguely understood by the prophets, shines forth in splendor in the New Testament. When Christ came he found the Jewish Church in possession of the doctrine, excepting the sect of the Sadducees; but he added emphasis and clearness to it:"

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

"And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."

The following passages from the Epistles of St. Paul also teach the same truth:

"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the

clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefor comfort one another with these words."

The whole of 1 Cor. xv. chapter is devoted to the doctrine of the resurrection, and is a declaration of Paul's faith in it and the reasons for his faith, and a powerful argument is presented, comparing it with events of common occurrence in the natural world. To this chapter the reader is referred.

The principal facts which the above passages show conclusively are these:

First. The raising of the dead is ascribed to Christ, and is represented as the last work to be undertaken by him for the salvation of men.

Second. All the dead will be raised without respect to age, rank, or character in this world.

Third. This event is not to take place before the end of the world, but at the day of judgment.

The resurrection of Christ must be the strongest argument that can be presented for the resurrection of mankind. It is in itself a demonstration of the possibility of a resurrection. We must think of this doctrine in the light that shines from the open and empty grave of Christ, whence he arose the third day and showed that he was the Son of God with power, demonstrating his divinity and the immortality of humanity, and giving to the world a pledge and proof of the resurrection of the saints.

By his resurrection, Christ established his claim to divinity, showing that he possessed life in himself; that he had power to lay down his life and power to take it again; and on the fact of Christ's resurrection depends our hope of salvation here and eternal life hereafter. "And if Christ be not risen, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." "The dogma of the resurrection is the proof of all other dogmas, the foundation of our Christian life and hope, the soul of the entire apostolic preaching, the corner-stone on which the Christian church is built." -- Prof. Christlieb.

The fact of the resurrection of Christ, so important to the establishment of the Christian faith, has been most wonderfully guarded, and is proved by the most indubitable evidence, so that to accept it is most reasonable; to deny it and accept any other hypothesis is the most unreasonable credulity.

He was seen of Mary on the morning of the resurrection; next he was seen by the two disciples as they journeyed toward Emmaus; then of the eleven as they sat at meat in Jerusalem; again at the sea of Galilee; and to preclude the idea that it was a mere vision, he said, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." The testimony of Paul is most unequivocal: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve; after that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are

fallen asleep. After that he, was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."

Such testimony as this would establish any fact in any age. "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" The history of redemption gives us a sublime fact on the most incontrovertible evidence of an actual and literal resurrection, as the consummation of the grand redemptive work of the Son of God, and this fact is pointed to as the assurance of the resurrection of all men. "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

What a glorious truth is here asserted! Not only is Christ arisen, but he is the first-fruits of them that have slept; the first sheaf gathered from the great harvest field; the first trophy won from death's dominions; the beginning of a long line of those destined to arise out of death's sleep to life eternal. The great head of humanity leads the way up from the tomb, and opens the gate for all our race. "As the first sheaf gathered and presented, under the Mosaic law, as a thank-offering to God, was the pledge and assurance of the ingathering of the whole harvest, so the resurrection of Christ is a pledge and proof of the resurrection of his people." -- Hodge. The doctrine of the resurrection has been received by the church of God ever since the days of the prophets, but more especially since Christ taught and demonstrated it. So deeply rooted was this in the minds of the Apostles that they made it most prominent in their teachings, as may be seen in the Epistles. It formed a very essential part of their preaching, and especially of those discourses by which the Holy Ghost operated upon the hearts of the people. It was peculiarly offensive to the enemies of Christianity, and its presentation excited their highest indignation. The Sadducees were objectors to the doctrine; to the Pharisees, though believers in the doctrine, the resurrection of Christ was an offence, because it was their condemnation. The historian of the apostles' labors says:

"And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide. Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand."

The Holy Ghost bore witness to the truth, and made it quick and powerful. Man is deeply wrought upon when brought in contact with the supernatural. The resurrection of the dead brings him face to face with his Maker, and introduces him to the solemnities of the judgment day. When the missionary Moffat visited an African chief, he preached to him and his headmen the resurrection of the dead. "What!" cried the chief, starting with surprise; "what are these words about the dead? The dead -- the dead arise?" "Yes," said the missionary, "all the dead shall rise." "Will my father rise? will all the dead slain in battle rise?" "Yes, and come to judgment." "Hark!" shouted the chief, turning to his warriors, "ye wise men, did your ears ever hear such news?" "Never," was the reply. Then turning to the missionary the chief said, "I do not wish to hear about the dead rising again; the dead cannot rise; the dead shall not rise." "Tell me," said the missionary, "why I may not speak of the resurrection?" Lifting his arm, which had been strong in battle, as if grasping a spear, the chief said, "I have slain my thousands; and shall

they rise?" As the truth flashed across the mind of this savage, it overwhelmed him. It is indeed a solemn thought that the injurer and injured shall stand face to face in the resurrection and judgment.

It is no more a doctrine of warning to the unrighteous than of comfort and edification to the people of God. Of the apostles it is written, "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all." Paul found it an appropriate subject to present to the philosophers at Athens. "He preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection." It is a matter of sincere regret that it forms so small a part of modern pulpit discourse. The central truth is lost sight of in its subordinate branches, and its nature and mode occupy so large a share of the thought given it, that its presentation suggests doubt when it should strengthen faith. If we heartily accept the fact, though we cannot understand it in all its relations, we shall find it one of the sublimest truths and most powerful doctrines to influence the hearts of men.

There are differences of opinion as to its nature, mode and time. Many reject the doctrine of a literal resurrection of the body laid in the grave, because of the supposed difficulties by which it is surrounded. Of these Bishop Foster, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, says: "They are many and great, but such as infinite power and wisdom could overcome. They are not, therefore, absolutely insurmountable; and as the resurrection is God's work, the magnitude of the difficulties weighs nothing." The infinite power and wisdom of God must be a sufficient answer to all objections arising from the difficulty of the work proposed. Christ's reply to such objectors was: "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God." But whatever the differences in opinion as to the nature of the resurrection body, there is general agreement as to the great fact, and this is the object of our hope.

The question, "With what body do they come?" has never been answered so as to satisfy the sceptical or the curious. The spirit of inspiration has left some things for the profound researches of men and for the exercise of faith; absolute knowledge of that which God has not revealed cannot be obtained. "This much, however, is certain: First. The body of the resurrection will be as strictly identical with the body of death as the body of death is with the body of birth. Second. Each soul will have an indubitable intuitive consciousness that its new body is identical with the old. Third. Each friend shall recognize the individual characteristics of the soul in the perfectly transparent expression of the new body." -- A. A. Hodge.

As to the important change that takes place in the body God has not left us in doubt. It will be changed from corruption to incorruption; from dishonor to glory; from weakness to power; from a natural body, that is adapted to the natural world in which we live, to a spiritual body adapted to the spiritual world in which we shall then live." Raised in incorruption." Not subject to disease or natural decay. In the resurrection life we shall never say, "I am sick." "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

"Raised in glory." What a contrast between the body under the dominion of death, and the body which has entered the resurrection state by the power of Christ, "who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working

whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself." The body that has borne a part in the suffering and humiliation induced by sin shall also bear a part in the redemption, and be a participant in the glory of him who has redeemed and transformed it. The glorified body of our Lord is the pattern of the glorified bodies of his saints.

"Raised in power." No more subject to fatigue by labor, decay by age, wasting by disease or dissolution by death. The power of the resurrection body shall be commensurate with the powers of the mind, and shall execute all the purposes and the volitions of the spirit with the utmost ease and readiness.

"Raised a spiritual body." An organization suited to the nature and capacities of the spirit, which, being lifted above all dependence upon the outward world, will forever display itself in incorruption, glory and power. There is in this a promise and a prophecy for man, as it opens before us a glorious field of activity and enjoyment.

In the spiritual birth which the Christian experiences he receives a new impulse toward purity and life. "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." "And this is the will of him that sent me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day." This life inspired in the soul by the spirit of God can only find a field for full development and activity in the world beyond the grave. Our resurrection will therefore be to a higher and nobler life. By the power of Almighty God we shall be lifted to a higher plane. Our redemption will be completed, and beyond that there will be a development, an unfolding of those sublime mental and moral powers that reveal themselves here in bonds and fetters. As the consciousness of power to fly makes the bird beat itself against the bars of its cage, so do "we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

There is much comfort in this doctrine for the believer. It furnishes the mind something tangible in regard to our departed loved ones. They are not lost; even the body is not annihilated. The child which we have clasped to our bosom with such tenderness and affection, we shall again love as devotedly and with greater intensity than we did on earth. The promises and attributes of God are pledged to this consummation of our hopes. Modern science and philosophy, so far as they are true and reliable, only reveal to us the wonderful wisdom and infinite power of God. They show the wonder and sublimity of his works; the infinite depths of his thoughts as embodied in the universe of mind and matter; and these do not militate against the truth of his promises, or the certainty of their fulfilment, but they strengthen our faith and confirm our hope; and they show that what God has promised to do for us at the last day in raising us from the dust of the grave is no greater than what he has done in the past or is doing at the present. The greatness of the miracle weighs nothing with a God of infinite power.

Then let the soul commune with its dead; God shall not mock the instincts of our nature or the hopes inspired by his Spirit. They shall rise again! We must look beyond the graves of our own dead; there is another in which the race has an interest, the grave in the Garden of Joseph of Arimathea. Ours are filled with dust sacred to us: that one is empty. The body of the Son of God, once as dead as the body we laid in the grave, has been reanimated; the burial garments have dropped from that glorious form; he could not be holden of death, and we no

longer look for the living among the dead. Light and life shine forth from that empty grave and throws its radiance athwart all other graves! Listen! and we may hear as from the very lips of the Redeemer, as the angel rolls away the stone: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

In times of distress, or of great need, when earthly hopes vanish and the props on which we lean are cut from beneath us, the strongest and the weakest minds are alike dependent and would gladly rest with childlike faith in the truth revealed in the gospel of Christ. In such an hour we all crave assurances of immortality and some truth congenial with the passing scene, covering the same ground, woven of the same material. We look for actual instances of resurrection in a body, like our own -- death visibly "swallowed up of life."

Such an instance we have in the resurrection of Christ. His resurrection makes both worlds one; it reveals the life of this world and the next as one life, the future only the completion of the present. How sublime is our destiny! What glory awaits the believer!

In the resurrection morning the body as well as the soul shall be brought under the full power of redemption. The soul stamped with the moral likeness of God and in harmony with the pure intelligences of the universe; the body changed and fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body; these two, reunited and retaining essential identity, shall complete man's perfect salvation from the dominion of sin, and he shall enter the consummation of his bliss.

Who shall describe the satisfaction of the soul in that hour! The world, sin, death and hell all vanquished. "I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness." It will be the peace of the child in its mother's bosom; the rest of the mariner when the storms are over; the joy of the conqueror crowned by his sovereign; the glory of the saint in the smile of his Lord. Resurrection! Wonderful scene!! Glorious morning!!! Roll on, ye cycles of time, and hasten the coming of the Lord!

"If A Man Die, Shall He Live Again?"
By Mary Sparkes Wheeler.

I stood beside the tomb,
Of buried love to weep;
Within my soul a gloom,
Impenetrably deep.
My heart was buried with my dead,
And bitter were the tears I shed.

"Tell me, if a man die,
O, shall he live again?"
I asked, but no reply
Came to my heart or brain.
"Speak! for this hope alone I crave,"
But all was "silent as the grave."

To Nature then I turned,
ôO, tell me, I implore!
Have we no lesson learned
From out thy bounteous store?
Do not the butterfly and flower
Proclaim a resurrection power?"

ôNay, mourner, not in me
Doth this rare wisdom dwell.
For of the mystery
Nor leaves, nor flowers can tell;
These give the faintest simile,
But prove not immortality."

To Science next I spoke:
"Say, shall the dead arise?"
A voice the silence broke:
I raised my tear-dimmed eyes;
But Science said,ö "Tis not in me
To fathom immortality.ö

With sages wise I wrought
Earth's secrets to unlock;
Amid the depths I sought
Replies in ancient rock:
The hieroglyphics graven there
Brought no relief to my despair.

Then upward to the sky,
Through realms of endless space,
From sun to sun, my eye
Sought a reply to trace.
Alas! no answer came to me
From out the vast infinity.

Vain search for hope, or cheer,
O Christ, away from thee!
Come, troubled soul, draw near,
And thou shalt find in me
The resurrection and the life.
Mourner believe, and cease thy strife.

* * * * *

'Tis immortality deciphers man,
And opens all the mysteries of his make.
Without it, half his instincts are a riddle;
Without it, all his virtues are a dream. -- Young.

But those who are found to have lived an eminently holy life, these are they who, being freed and set at large from these regions in the earth, as from a prison, arrive at the pure abode above,... since our soul is certainly immortal. -- Socrates.

Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures forever more. -- David.

In all the works of God we find conclusive evidences of a gradual development. The material universe in its magnificent perfection was not spoken into being in a moment, in the state in which we now see it. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep." The Spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters, and his creative and formative energies were manifested, and the work of creation went forward in an ascending line: a series of generations whose highest point was reached in man. It is possible for us to read the history of creation in its great outlines in the mountains and valleys, the rocks and ravines; and trace the varied epochs and transitions by which the earth reached its present state, and by which it was made a suitable home for the human race. We find in the earlier geologic history evidences of terrestrial beings in constant succession and progression from the lower to the higher orders.

We may take this as indicative of the general method of God's procedure in creation and revelation. A gradual unfolding, a development, a building up from the foundation, a dispersion of the darkness by the diffusion of light. It has been thus with the revelations of God's nature and the destiny of man. It is now impossible to know how much light and knowledge man possessed in his primeval state, but we have abundant evidence of his retrogression from the path of purity and his consequent fall, by which he lost the true knowledge of God and his own future. From this state of mental darkness and moral degradation, it pleased God to call him and give him a revelation of light and truth. But this light was not given like the sudden bursting forth of the noon-day sun upon the darkness of midnight, but was rather conformed to God's method in creation, and to analogies in nature. From the formless void to the symmetry and beauty of the perfect world by successive steps; from the dark night to the perfect day by gradations of light: first the morning twilight, the gradual lifting of the clouds and mist, the first rays darting upward from the horizon, then the sun's full disk shining in beauty and splendor.

God's method of working has not been by a succession of surprises; but every revelation has been preceded by a preparatory stage, a foreshadowing of what was to come. The doctrine of immortality has reached its present form in the same way. We cannot point to the time when it was in any sense new, or to any race among whom it was unknown. All nations have left, in their philosophy, poetry, and institutions some traces of it. Some travellers have reported the discovery of tribes in Africa, and other parts of the earth, without it; but other travellers, on a closer investigation, have shown that they were in error. A few are found in all Christian

countries who deny all religious truth, and therefore ignore their own immortality; but in almost all instances there is underlying the professed scepticism a latent but strong conviction of accountability and immortality. When men reach the point of a denial of the existence of God and the immortality of the soul, they have rendered themselves unnatural by passion or depravity. If it were possible for us to divest our minds of all thoughts and influences derived from the Bible, we would still find in man's own soul evidences of immortality, longings for a future life; and without these humanity could not be perfect. If man should be divested of all thoughts, motives, inspirations, and emotions that grow out of the doctrine of immortality, the most vital part of manhood would be taken away; the germ, the kernel of life would be gone, and nothing would remain but the dry and worthless husk.

Among the least civilized of our race, when the grossness and rubbish of sensuality is cleared away, underneath, in the texture of the soul itself, we find those instincts and desires that point directly to immortality. There is an inherent desire to live, a longing for immortality; and the dread of physical death is abated by the hope of a life beyond the grave. The diviner instincts of the soul show themselves in these yearnings. They are the outgoings of the nature that God has planted within us, and are indicative of what we shall be when the present constitution of things is overthrown. As the eye points to the light, and the lungs to the air; as the wings of the bird and the fins of the fish point to their correspondencies in air and water; and as all other natural wants point to their correlatives in nature, so do these longings of the soul for continued existence point to an immortal life.

"It must be so, Plato, thou reason est well!
Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
This longing after immortality?
Or whence this secret dread and inward horror
Of falling into naught? Why shrinks the soul
Back on herself, and startles at destruction?
'Tis the divinity that stirs within us;
'Tis heaven itself that points out a hereafter,
And intimates eternity to man."

Some among the ancient philosophers entertained this hope, and reasoned for it independent of the Jewish scriptures. We may turn to Socrates, who may be regarded as the product of the highest heathen civilization, and in him we find expressions of the strongest hope of immortality. He was born about five hundred years before Christ and could have borrowed nothing from the gospel, though it is possible he may have had some knowledge of the Jewish prophets. In speaking of the future life he was eloquent and sublime; and but for the lack of positiveness, and the authority that pervades the scriptures, we would think him inspired of God. His conceptions were noble and elevated. In the spirit world he would hold converse with the wise and good, and with the great dead of his own historic time. In his defence before his judges, who condemned him to death, he argued that death was no great calamity but rather a blessing. He said: "If death be a removal from hence to another place, and what is said be true, that all the dead are there, what greater blessing can there be, my judges? At what price would you not estimate a conference with Orpheus and Musæus, Hesiod and Homer? I, indeed, should be willing to die often if this be true. For to me the sojourn there would be admirable, when I

should meet with Palamedes and Ajax, son of Telamon, and any other of the ancients who have died by an unjust sentence. At what price, my judges, would not anyone estimate the opportunity of questioning him who led that mighty army against Troy; or Ulysses, Sisyphus, or ten thousand others, whom one might mention; both men and women? With whom to converse and associate and to question them would be an inconceivable happiness. Surely for that the judges there do not condemn to death; for in other respects those who live there are more happy than those who live here, and are henceforth immortal, if at least what is said be true."⁴

Plato, the disciple of Socrates, was the first, so far as we know, who sought by argument to establish the doctrine of Immortality. "He distinguished what is corporeal from the soul, which he considered to be an eternal self-acting agency; and to him we owe the first formal development of the doctrine of its spirituality and the first attempt towards demonstrating its immortality."⁵ Cicero, who lived a hundred years before Christ, wrote most eloquently of the immortality of the soul. "I am well convinced, then, that my dear departed friends are so far from having ceased to live, that the state they now enjoy can alone with propriety be called life. This opinion I am induced to embrace, not only as agreeable to the best deductions of reason, but in just deference, also, to the authority of the noblest and most distinguished philosophers. I consider this world as a place which nature never designed for my permanent abode; and I look upon my departure out of it, not as being driven from my habitation, but as leaving my inn."⁶

A belief in the immortality of the soul and a future state has existed from the earliest times and spread generally among the nations. It is not probable that the ideas originated in the reasoning of men or from merely human wisdom, but they were probably received by tradition from former generations, running back in an unbroken line to men who held intercourse with God, and this doctrine formed a part of the primitive religion imparted by the Creator to our first parents in Eden. But after the fall the degeneracy of men was so great, the corruption of manners and morals so deep, that the tendency was to deface these primitive doctrines and thrust men out into the utter darkness of atheism or idolatry.

In tracing this hope, we find that the more true the mind is to itself and to God the more intensely it clings to existence. We feel conscious that unless there is another life, the present life is a failure, a greater failure than can be found in any other department of God's work with which we are acquainted. The present with man is not much compared with the future. It is but a passing moment, a shadow, a dream; the future is eternity. Hope is the soul's great sheet-anchor, and when this is entirely wanting the sooner the frail bark is engulfed beneath the waves, the better. And this hope must not be in regard to some brighter phase of the present life, but must be cast within the veil, whither Christ has for us entered. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."

God has left his own impress of immortality upon man's nature; his longings are premonitory; and man must be immortal or God is not true to himself or to his creature. The creation of a human soul, the filling of this world with human beings, is one of the most stupendous acts of God. "It was a little thing when he ventured to beautify the earth with animals and birds and beasts and living things that can feel sensation. But, oh, when he took a human soul out of his soul, when he ventured to make a being like himself, that could think until agony, that could feel until bursting of grief or of rapture, and set it up going; when he set it up with

its awful love and sympathies; when he turned human souls into this world to form alliances, to enter into bonds of affection, to make households and families; when he made fathers, mothers and children, husbands and wives and young hearts with boundless affection; when he created a world of souls that were like himself, he made the awfullest venture of all his creation. And I say that the only vindication of the Eternal Throne that ever can be made by angels or men, is that these souls, with their wealth of power, shall live with him forever, if they are true and faithful to the trust committed to them."⁷

These are the arguments which reason, based upon the inherent yearnings of the soul, would present, but we must go to the pure word of God for authoritative teaching.

The Bible presents this doctrine, in its general scope and sublime promises, in its terrible threatenings and positive declarations, and in its ten thousand expressions of hope, joy, peace and satisfaction, that are all utterly meaningless, vapid and void if the soul be not immortal. It is on this granite foundation that the doctrine rests. Nature and reason combined would not be sufficient to set the mind at ease if it were not found in the Bible. But truth taught by nature and revelation, cemented by the highest reason, rests upon a foundation against which the gates of hell shall not prevail.

The idea prevails to some extent that the Old Testament does not in any conclusive sense teach the immortality of the soul. But we have shown that the Greek and Roman philosophers knew something of it; and is it not reasonable to suppose that the Hebrew prophets would know more, and, while they argued less, would be more authoritative in their declarations? We believe that the thought and spirit of immortality pervades the whole Bible. It is interwoven with every fibre. It sings in its poetry and breathes in its prayers. It lies at the foundation of every promise and prophecy. It is seen in its lamentations and its triumphal songs; in its aspirations, joys and hopes. It is the standpoint from which alone it can be understood or appreciated; the only medium through which its sublime truths, conveyed in song, in prayer and prophecy, can be interpreted. It is not taught in the Old Testament with the same fulness of statement or conclusiveness with which it is taught in the New Testament; but it lies at the foundation; it is the substratum upon which all other truth rests. It is like the granite rocks in the constitution of the material world: it lies too deep to be seen by superficial observers, but here and there it breaks through the overlying crust and shows itself in its greatness and strength. In the Old Testament the flower of immortality is in the bud, but sufficiently opened for us to judge of its nature, while in the New Testament it is expanded fully and sends forth its fragrance for the healing of the nations. The promises, prophecies, types, figures and allusions of the Old Testament were not fully understood until the Gospel was promulgated, and many of them were explained by the events that fulfilled them. But the belief of the patriarchs in the promise of a Redeemer, and their expectation of a future life, appear evident from their history and by the testimony to their faith given by Christ and his apostles. In the New Testament immortality shines forth for all who have an eye to see or an ear to hear. In the Old Testament, "There is thrown over it a veil of holy reserve, making it all the more impressive when the truth is seen through it." It is for the devout and believing. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and to them will he make known his covenant." So has it been in every age. The devout and believing soul, opening itself to the divine Spirit, is filled with divine light and hope, while

the careless and unbelieving shut out the truth that would purify, cheer and guide through the dark mazes of this mortal life.

The covenant of God made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob indicates the doctrine in question, and to men who communed with God as they did, it must have been understood. Because this was not seen by the Sadducees we are not to conclude that the patriarchs did not see its full import. The darkness had accumulated and covered up the spiritual truth, and Christ in his controversy with the Sadducees uncovered it. He quoted the words, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Then brushing away the rubbish of unbelief, the accumulation of centuries, he brought to view the whole truth in his striking comment, which must have been as startling as it was conclusive: "God is not the God of the dead but of the living." Not I was, but I AM. "He does not thus solemnly declare himself the God of things non-existent." -- T. Lewis. How little force there would be in such a covenant made with creatures of a day! How little force in the declaration, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob!" "It would be a sort of solemn pomposity that would mock the subjects of it. If the covenant pertained only to the perpetuity of the Jews in this life it would have meant no more than if God had said, "I am the God of horses, cattle and sheep," for these have had a linked succession until now and a perpetuity of equal spiritual value, if their destiny be the same.

The Hebrew prophets did not give loose reins to fancy and speak of the spirit-world with the freedom of the old heathen philosophers and mythologists, who rushed heedlessly on where "angels fear to tread." They only "spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." But this adds weight and importance to their testimony, and gives their words an authority not possessed by any other. This clothes the language which expresses their longings and desires with a deep and earnest meaning; and it gives special significance to their actions, in which they seemed to regard the world to come as of greater importance than the present life. The conduct of Moses in adopting the cause of the Israelites can only be understood on the supposition that he possessed a knowledge of immortality. "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. What was the reward? Not an inheritance in Canaan; he had no warrant from God to look for that, nor did he ever attain it; but it was what his believing ancestors looked for, a future state of happiness in heaven. It was his knowledge of immortality and glory that stimulated him to heroic action for God and his chosen people. The New Testament reveals to us the motives and considerations that had weight with the ancients, and shows clearly that their actions were based upon this doctrine.

We have in early Bible times one striking event that bears upon this subject: the translation of Enoch. This must have meant something other than death, and must have conveyed the idea of continued existence in another sphere. The ideas of the primitive religion had not yet been obliterated from the mind, nor so degenerated as that the true could not be distinguished from the fabulous. That immortality was one of those ideas is shown by the faith of the early patriarchs and the universal faith of mankind extending backward to the remotest periods through every nationality and tribe. And the translation might have been a revelation to the antediluvians of the mode by which man, if he had not sinned, might have attained to another

and higher life. Enoch "stands as the citadel of immortality, of the victory over death, and of the ideal form of translation, in the midst of the death periods of the primitive fathers;"⁸ and is in himself alone, a sufficient voucher that the Old Testament in its very first stages is stamped with the idea of immortality.

At a later period Elijah was translated, and Elisha was a living eye-witness of his master's departure heavenward.

But the Psalms really abound in passages that imply the doctrine, and can receive no plain and reasonable interpretation but upon the hypothesis of the soul's immortality. "I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I wake in thy likeness." "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol." "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." It plainly appears that the Psalmist hoped to live beyond the grave, and to enjoy happiness at the right hand of God.

The same hope is found also in the Prophets. "Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord, my God, mine Holy One? We shall not die." "The spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Besides these passages, all those which speak of a resurrection of the dead and a general judgment. It is impossible to read these scriptures from the standpoint we now occupy, and not conclude that they teach unequivocally or by fair interpretation the immortality of man.

But did the ancients understand them as we do? Did they mean to say in them that they had hope beyond the grave? Did the Jewish people all through the centuries believe in this doctrine? The sect of the Sadducees who denied immortality, existing as a protest against the more prevalent opinion of the Pharisees who taught it, is proof that the general faith of the Jewish nation was firm in the existence of the spirit world and a future for man. If, as some assert, they had their origin only three hundred years before Christ, they were entirely unknown during the times of the prophets. On one occasion Christ said, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." Whence did they get these opinions, these thoughts of "eternal life?" They did not learn them of Christ, they would not receive him. They had these expectations of life before Christ came, and they were based upon the scriptures -- that is, the Old Testament. If the Jewish scriptures do not teach the immortality of man, then we have the strange anomaly of a whole nation, with a slight exception, believing in a doctrine of the highest importance to happiness and life, about which their religious teachers had been silent for two thousand years.

It is incontrovertible that the ancient Greek philosophers had hope of immortality, and taught it; that Plato endeavored to demonstrate it, and many of their disciples died in this faith. Socrates and Plato lived four or five hundred years before Christ, and must have been contemporary with some of the later prophets of the Jews. And this doctrine did not originate with Socrates; he received it from men more ancient than himself. "He saw this faith reflected in the universal convictions of mankind, and in the common traditions of all ages. No one refers more frequently than he to the grand old mythologic stories which express this faith." -- Dr. Cocker. These men in their best moments of faith and reason had tolerably clear conceptions of immortality, and can we for a moment suppose that the Hebrew prophets, whose conceptions of God were infinitely superior to theirs, were more ignorant of immortality and life? It cannot be.

Then the generations from Adam to Christ were not left in total darkness. They preserved the ideas of the primitive religion, and among the Jews the light of revelation confirmed and established them. That dispensation which was "a shadow of good things to come" had a light behind it; and at least all outline of the coming glory was seen in the "shadow" projected up the ages. The dead were not borne to the grave without hope. Enoch, who walked and talked with God and "was not, for God took him," had some realization of eternal life before the gates of the celestial city swung back to receive him. Abraham had some conceptions of the covenant that took hold on the life to come; and Moses from the top of Pisgah not only viewed the land of Canaan, but looked beyond the vista of earth and time and saw the "recompense of the reward" to which he "had respect" when he espoused the cause of the enslaved Israelites. The great soul of Elijah was filled with hope of immortality when he stepped into the chariot for his heavenly journey, and as the fiery steeds drove up toward the ethereal blue, he dropped the grossness of the material body and assumed a spiritual garb, the mortal put on immortality and was swallowed up of life.

The doctrine of a future life was, to the ancients, a "light shining in a dark place," and the pure, the consecrated and believing were sustained by it amidst the distractions of time, the ravages of death, and the apparent conquests of the grave. But God reserved some better thing for us, some "surer word of prophecy to which we do well to take heed." A stronger hope, a better dispensation, in which death is abolished, and immortality and life are brought to light, or made more clearly manifest, by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

* * * * *

07 -- IMMORTALITY MADE MANIFEST BY CHRIST

Glory to God in full anthems of joy;
The being he gave us death cannot destroy:
Sad were the life we may part with to morrow,
If tears were our birthright, and death were our end;
But Jesus hath cheered the dark valley of sorrow,
And bade us, immortal, to heaven ascend:
Lift then your voices in triumph on high,
For Jesus hath risen, and man shall not die. -- Ware.

Our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. -- Paul.

The spiritual import of the Old Testament was, in a great degree, veiled from the understanding until the fuller development of the plans of God by Christ and his apostles. The devout and believing in the patriarchal age, and the pious and thoughtful under the Mosaic dispensation, had a perception of the prophecies and promises that gave strength to their faith and hope, and led them to look for the coming of the Messiah, for a heavenly country and "a city that hath foundations whose builder and maker is God." But the full view of the great underlying doctrines of revelation was not granted them. Of this salvation that has come to us they inquired

and searched diligently. "Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow."

It remained for Christ in the new dispensation to clear away the mists, and bring out into clearer and closer view the great mysteries of the life to come.

The doctrine of immortality was not new, and did not in any sense originate with Christ; but this and many other doctrines were touched into brightness by his teachings. This doctrine to the ancients was like the tall mountain peaks painted against the sky in the morning twilight. The outline is perfect, but the details that add so much of beauty are not discernible by reason of the mists that hang about them. But now under the teaching of Christ the clouds have been dispersed, and the mountain stands out in harmony, strength, and beauty from base to peak. Every line of detail is plainly visible, and the whole is touched into brightness as by the rays of the morning sun. It was a veiled statue, where the drapery hung in graceful folds, revealing the outline of concealed beauty, which was rich in promise for the generations to come, and which animated the soul to an earnest expectation and longing for a full, unclouded vision. Christ lifted his hand and removed the veil, revealing the statue in all its perfection. In the Old Testament is the promise, in the New is the demonstration. In the Old men believe and expect; in the New, we know. The resurrection and, by consequence, the immortality of man are demonstrated by the resurrection of Christ, and by his life beyond the grave.

If we look at Christ in the character of a prophet, he stood between the two dispensations: the Old was passing away, the New was coming. Christ was the connection between the two. They were like the dissolving views in the stereopticon, where the outline of the picture upon which we have just looked gradually fades away into that of the new one, which slowly assumes distinctness. Christ taught with greater force the doctrines which the prophets taught, assuming them to be true; never arguing, but rather with divine authority enforcing accepted truth. "The doctrine of immortality in a world to come, has not in the teachings of Christ the appearance of a fresh, philosophical theory or a new truth, kindling in him a constant surprise and intensity. It seems rather like unconscious knowledge. He speaks of the great invisible world as if it had always lain before him, and as familiarly as to us stretches the landscape which we have seen since our birth." -- Beecher. In searching the teachings of Christ, we need not expect positive declarations or profound arguments in relation to a future life. They are not to be found, they do not exist. This, no doubt, has been a grievous disappointment to many minds who, oppressed with doubt and searching for truth, have turned with anxious hearts to the New Testament, and expected to find the doctrine definitely declared, elaborately formulated, and supported by profound argument. But this was not the method of Jesus. The assertion of a future life is scarcely to be met with in his teachings; the assumption of it pervades them. The method of Christ was to unfold, to develop and demonstrate to the minds, and even to the senses of men, a doctrine already hoary with age, and which had been the support and hope of many generations. The Lord Jesus left the doctrine of man's immortality where the Father first placed it -- at the foundation. It is on that the whole superstructure of revelation is reared. The constant assumption of it is stronger proof of its truth than any assertion or argument could be. What advantage then have we over the ancients, who were in possession of Moses and the prophets? Much every way. The teachings of Christ have an almost infinite value as a confirmation of the

Hebrew prophets. He was the substance of those shadows which they projected into the ages of their future. He met the requirements of their predictions so closely, that conviction was irresistible to the impartial, unprejudiced mind, and that which to them was an unrealized vision was in him an accomplished fact. His knowledge was greater and deeper than theirs. He was the source of their inspiration. To them these things had been revealed: he was the Revealer. They had seen visions: he was conversant with eternal realities. They had hope of immortality: he had conscious knowledge of pre-existence in past eternity. "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." There is great significance in the apostle's declaration: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." We readily accept the apostle's conclusion or inference: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip."

The popular philosophy in the Greek and Roman mind in the days of Christ was against the doctrine of immortality; but the popular thought and feeling of that and every age are in favor of it, because nature is true to herself. Epicurus had taught that death would end all, not only misery but existence, and to think of immortality was a species of folly: that the consequence of moral acts could not reach the actor beyond the grave. These views no doubt were well known to the intelligent Jews, and had some influence on the mind of Christ. How strenuously he insisted upon future retribution for the actions done in the body! What vivid pictures he gave of the judgment day and the final separation of the righteous and the wicked! what a forceful portrayal of the glory of the one and the misery of the other! And in this his teachings were in accord with the ancestral faith, with the convictions of his nation, and with the popular "feeling of all nations, for in spite of the prevailing philosophy men continued to fear death and to hope for immortal life. Philosophy oftener affects the head than the heart, and thought and feeling are not always in accord. Often when philosophy seems to sway the minds of the learned and widely influences the upper ranks in life, the popular heart is untouched by it. The intuitions of the soul are deeper than the arguments of men.

A recent writer says, "When Jesus Christ appeared in this world, the Epicurean philosophy, the fables of poets of a lower world and the corruption which was prevalent among the nations, had fully destroyed the hope, to say nothing of a belief, in future existence."⁹ This we do not receive, the declaration is too sweeping. It accords too much power to a false philosophy, and too little to the intuitions of the human soul. It was the strong and prevailing belief in the Jewish nation that the soul of man is immortal, and we find declarations of it in other nations. Cicero, who died but a few years before the advent of Christ, said: "O glorious day! when I shall retire from this low sordid scene, to associate with the divine assembly of departed spirits! Thus to think and thus to act, has rendered my old age no inconvenient state to me, but even an agreeable one. And after all, should this my firm persuasion of the soul's immortality prove to be delusion, it is at least a pleasing delusion and I will cherish it to my latest breath."¹⁰ There is something in man too deep for philosophy to reach, a want which it cannot fill.

The ancients based their hopes of immortality on reason and arguments drawn from the nature and capacities of the soul, and the analogies in nature. We as Christians hold these and many more as corroborative and confirmatory, while we base our hope on the teachings of divine

revelation. Christ taught it expressly to his followers by allusion to the retributions of God in a future state. He taught that great joy and peace would be awarded to the righteous. "Then, Peter said, Lo, we have left all and followed thee. And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting." On one occasion Christ enjoined the exercise of a true philanthropy from motives that take hold on eternity. "But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; And thou shalt be blessed for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." In this promise of Christ, the reward is not in this world or life, but in the future world, after the resurrection of the dead, and for virtuous deeds done in the body. "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven." In one instance at least Christ draws back the veil from the unseen world and gives us a view of the condition and surroundings of both the righteous and the wicked in the immortal state. "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he li(~ed up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." There can be neither pleasure nor pain where there is no life; but Lazarus was enjoying pleasure, and the rich man was enduring torment. Many of the parables teach the same truth. The description which Christ gives of the future judgment, and the awards to the righteous and the wicked, must of necessity have immortality for their basis. In his interview with the Sadducees, Christ clearly taught it by refuting those who held opposite views, and by positive declaration as to the nature and condition of the saints in the heavenly world: "They are as the angels of God."

It is not too much to say that we know man is immortal by the demonstration given of it by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and his life beyond the grave. The resurrection of the Son of God from the dead is one of the best established facts connected with the Christian system. God's wisdom is manifest in so overruling all things pertaining to it, as to furnish the most incontestible proof of the resurrection of the Saviour. Its importance to the Christian plan was recognized by Paul, and he suspends the whole truth of Christianity upon this one fact. "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ; whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised; and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins."

In this is the great value of the testimony of Christ over that of the prophets. He exemplified in his own person the resurrection of the dead, and life in the post-resurrection world. He abolished death and trampled it under his feet. He gave us a specimen of his workmanship, as the destroyer of the works of the devil, and of what he will do for all men at the end of the world. He brought life and immortality up out of the darkness of the grave, so that all who do not veil their faces may see it.

Bishop Foster says: "However it may awaken surprise, truth demands that we should make the confession that we do not know that death does not end all. Nor does any man know that it does. If it were given to men on the earth to know, that would be the end of uncertainty or even questioning. We do not know; therefore we are liable to have misgivings, doubts, and

fears. There is not a single fact within our reach that furnishes us absolute knowledge."¹¹ The language we have quoted seems too gloomy to be uttered after the resurrection of Christ. It belongs to the old dispensation. It is like what the prophets might have said when the truth shone but dimly through the mist: before the divine intimations made to Job, David, Isaiah, and Daniel had been made clear by the events and teachings of the New Testament. But it is our privilege to rise to higher things, and enjoy that which is more tangible and positive. The doctrine that men live after death has been taken from the realm of promise and faith to that of well authenticated history and fact. The resurrection and, consequently, the immortality of man are demonstrated by the resurrection of Christ, and by his life beyond the grave. Is it true, then, that man cannot know that there is a life after death? Is it true that there is not a single fact within our reach that furnishes us absolute knowledge of immortality? What is it "to know?" "To be aware of as true or actual; to have mental cognition of; to perceive or apprehend clearly; to be convinced of the truth of; to have information of; to be assured of." To have mental cognition now, of our own life after death as a matter of experience, is of course an impossibility. But in every sense of the words, "to know," we may use them in relation to the fact of Christ's resurrection and life. The tomb of Christ with the dead body in it, resting in gloom and silence, and the stone and seal shutting out, apparently forever, the light of hope, is a fitting finality to the dispensation of law. It was all that it could do. Up to that hour the grave had never been opened by a true resurrection. Joseph and Nicodemus, when they closed the grave of Jesus on Friday evening at sunset, might have said, as Bishop Foster now says, "We have neither sense nor mental vision of man after he dies. He does not again appear within the range of our faculties. We do not find him. Where he is, or that he is at all, is absolutely unknown to us. Our consciousness is silent on the subject. The dead do not come back to us, and we are not able to go to them."¹² But that dispensation is past. The seal of the Jewish Sanhedrin, dashed to pieces by the rising Son of God, is an emblem of the wreck of the Jewish polity, and the destruction of its ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

The new dispensation opens by the bursting of a sealed tomb; by the assertion of divine over human and satanic authority; by bringing life out of death, and by the restoration of the shattered hopes of the human race. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." We cannot now say, "The dead do not come back to us." It is true all the dead do not come back to us; this would not be desirable or profitable. To multiply instances would lessen our regard for them and the impression they would make upon the mind. One instance, well authenticated, is enough for the world; this instance we have in Jesus Christ, and we point to him as the great fact that unequivocally demonstrates the immortality of man.

What a contrast between the old and new dispensations! Under the first the people hoped and believed; under the second we know, for Jesus Christ, the representative and "forerunner" of our race, who was dead is alive again, and has appeared "within the range of human faculties." Nine different times he showed himself to his disciples. In every reasonable way he presented himself to their senses. "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken he showed them his hands and his feet." What a contrast between the Saturday evening and Sunday morning! The striking figures in the evening scene are darkness and death; those of the morning

are light and life. The one is the sun setting; the other the sun rising. The Roman soldier guards the dead body; the angel of God is the witness of the risen Christ. The soldier as he who looked upon the unbroken seal at the midnight watch might have said: "All's well; the dead still sleeps!" The angelic sentinel at the morning watch might have said: "Christ is risen; all's well!" This shed new light upon all the plan. Every event that preceded it was illumined with a new glory. Human hope leaped up with all the freshness and vigor of a new life; it rested now upon a firmer and broader basis, even upon accomplished truth, as well as on promises and prophecies.

However, "dull and slow of heart to believe" and understand the apostles were before the resurrection of Christ, they had a clear comprehension of his teachings afterward. Christ was with them forty days instructing them in the things that concerned the kingdom of God. And to bring all things to their remembrance that Christ had spoken, and to preserve them from misapprehension, the Holy Ghost was given. It is likely many things were said to them not now recorded, upon which they could base declarations and which gave them a clearer understanding of the teachings of the divine Master. The apostles understood the doctrine of immortality as included in the teachings of Christ and as demonstrated by his resurrection. St. Paul says: "To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life." That is, to those who persevere in good works, seeking glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. In this Paul follows the instructions of his Master. "My sheep hear my voice, & I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life." The same thought is expressed again and eternal life is represented as the fruit of continually walking in the holiness secured to us by Christ. "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." Also, "Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." And Paul's dying testimony is to the same effect: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." These passages do not show any new revelation; they are not even a new phase of the same truth, but are the legitimate outgrowth of the words of Christ, and of Paul's faith in them.

To the same effect is Peter's testimony: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." Whatever Peter's hope was before the resurrection of Christ, afterward it was immeasurably expanded. Though it died in Peter's bosom when Christ died on the cross, it was begotten again and made alive by the resurrection of Christ from the dead. The hope that died was probably based upon a wrong conception of Christ's mission and kingdom, but that begotten by the resurrection was more intelligent and real and had as its fruition an inheritance pure in its character and permanent in its nature, undefiled by sin and uninfluenced by the mutations of time.

St. James also looked forward to a "crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."

The apostle John is very definite, and speaks with the utmost minuteness. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life. For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested unto us." This had been shown them so clearly, and had been brought within the range of their senses in such a way, that they could not be mistaken. There could be no illusion about it. It was to John the end of all controversy, the end of all doubt. He knew that Jesus Christ, on whose bosom he had rested, whose kiss had been imprinted on his cheek, and whose words had fallen upon his ear, though crucified by Pilate and buried by Joseph of Arimathea, was alive from the dead, and had returned to the Father from whom he came forth. And John trusted in the promise made by the Redeemer to his followers, "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life."

St. John desired to make such an impression upon the minds of his readers who believed on Christ, as should lift them out of all uncertainty and carry them beyond the region of doubt and fear. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."

The word immortality occurs but few times in the scriptures, but in the passages above quoted eternal life is predicated of the human soul as its reward for well doing, and as its inheritance in Jesus Christ. It is presented by him as the object which all should strive to obtain, as the supreme good and that which he died to secure for those who love and obey him. It is placed in contrast with eternal death; everlasting enjoyment in opposition to everlasting misery, and, as these cannot be predicated of that which does not live forever, it shows that all the teachings of the New Testament are based upon the immortality of the soul.

In the Old Testament we find patriarchs and prophets rejoicing in the hope of an immortal destiny. In the New Testament Christ sheds purer light upon it by his teaching. We look into his empty grave and the mystery is solved, not by human thought, but by Almighty power. The words and resurrection of Christ are the basis of our hope of a future resurrection for mankind, and of our knowledge of life beyond the grave. The resurrection of Christ as an historic fact has stood the test of the severest criticism; the fact itself is beyond the province of science, and it stands amazed in presence of him who was dead but is alive again. False philosophy, both ancient and modern, is set at naught. "Mortality is swallowed up of life." This glorious life is not of man, neither was its discovery made by the researches of man, " but according to the power of God, who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began; but is now made manifest by the appearance of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

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08 -- FAITH IN IMMORTALITY A SOURCE OF COMFORT

'Tis immortality, 'tis that alone,

Amid life's pains, abasement, emptiness,
The soul can comfort, elevate, and fill. -- Young.

I give unto them eternal life. -- Jesus.
Comfort one another with these words. -- Paul.

The doctrine of immortality yields to the thoughtful and pure mind the profoundest satisfaction. Our longings for life are intense, and we gladly receive every fact confirmatory of our faith. We look within and contemplate the soul's nature, and from its immateriality, power to think, to reason, and love, conclude it is a spiritual substance that cannot be dissolved by death. We look upon the analogies in the natural world that show a gradation in the phases of life in certain creatures, and are confirmed in our faith that man shall yet emerge from this lower life to that which is higher, purer; and better.

We search the holy scriptures and find the doctrine taught clearly and positively. We know it was the support of the Old Testament saints, and lies at the foundation of every promise and aspiration in the New Testament, and is wonderfully demonstrated by the resurrection and post-resurrection life of Jesus Christ.

All power, both in heaven and in earth, is committed unto the Son of God; and his blessed words, "I will raise him up at the last day;" "I give unto them eternal life," are significant to us; we rest in them, and they give assurance and peace.

"How do we know our dead shall rise?
Under the skies
Hearts are asking in anguish deep:
Out of their sleep,
O, will they wake to an endless life?

"Behold! Where the Lord, the Christ, hath lain!
Travail and pain--
The death -- the grave -- then, the open door;
Question no more!
Christ hath risen -- Our dead shall rise!ö

The believer in Christ will say: "With this conviction and assurance I am satisfied. The mystery of my being is explained. Earth is not my abiding home. The grave is not my final resting-place. My life is not a mere bubble cast upon the waves of time to float a moment, and then to sink into nothingness. The aspirations of my soul, as boundless as the universe, are not to remain forever unrealized. I shall live; I shall know; I shall enjoy, and my soul will forever expand, and be filled with intelligence and joy."

Much of the pleasure of life is made up of anticipation; an expectancy of future good. Imagination helps us, and there is no subject upon which we may allow imagination to revel with greater safety than this. There is no danger of exceeding the reality, and thus deceive ourselves. All that faith can grasp, all that hope can paint, will be more than realized in immortality.

Yea, and before we rise
To that immortal state,
The thoughts of such amazing bliss
Should constant joys create."

What a contrast between the present and the future! what we are and what we shall be. "Now I am weak, but I shall be strong then; I am poor now, but I shall be rich then; I am sinful now, but I shall be holy then; I am disappointed now, but I shall harvest fruitions then; I am weary and heavy-laden now, but then I shall lay my head on the bosom of God and rest; I am sick and dying now, but I shall be immortal then; now I am despised, but I shall be somebody; I shall accomplish something! Eternity is mine, and it perfects me! Let the old rusty clock of time tick away the minutes, and strike out the passing years. We are listening to the morning bells of the eternal years. Come, Lord Jesus, and come quickly, and let us find our perfection in thee." -- I. G. Bidwell.

The happiness derived will be in proportion to the strength and steadfastness of our faith in the doctrine. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." To enjoy communion with God, we must believe in his existence and government. To enjoy full hope of immortality, we must be freed from all conflicting doubts. Happy is the man who reposes with confidence upon the teachings of the word of God. But there should be an intensity to our faith that is seldom seen. We hold many of the most solemn verities of our holy religion in a sort of half consciousness: we believe them, but do not realize them. They do not burn within us, setting our whole moral and intellectual nature on fire, sending a life-current of energy through every part of our being; they do not arouse us to impetuous action, or to a persistency of effort born of strong conviction. To reach the highest usefulness or zeal in the cause of Christ, we must recognize man's immortality; to reach the highest joy in our own souls, we must live on the threshold of the immortal life.

Our comfort in hours of deep trial comes from the conviction of immortality. This conviction is necessary to resignation to the divine will. If there be no compensation for losses, disappointments, and bereavement, there can be no ground for resignation. We may bow our heads sullenly to inexorable fate, but can find no inspiration of gratitude, hope, or love. We have heard of a lady of culture who bowed by the side of her dying child, and piteously plead with God for its life; but the boon was denied her. She rose from her knees in rebellion, and said: "I will never pray to God again while I live." Poor soul! The anguish of bereavement is too great if we forget the redemptive work of Christ and immortality.

This thought takes the bitterest ingredient from our cup of sorrow when death robs us of our loved ones. They still live, but have passed beyond the range of our faculties. They are spiritual beings, and enjoy a spiritual life: only separated from us by the veil of flesh. They have been promoted in the scale of being beyond our highest conception.

"With what unknown delight the mother smiled,
When this frail treasure in her arms she pressed!
Her prayer was heard -- she clasped a living child;

But how the gift transcends the poor request!
A child was all she asked, with many a vow;
Mother, behold the child an angel now!"

Like the vine, the soul sends out its tendrils to grasp that which is higher and stronger than itself. When it is firmly entwined about the eternal, it is borne above the desolations of death. It stands erect when every earthly prop is cut from beneath. All earthly losses combined cannot affect the immortal. They may make the pathway rougher, but they hasten the consummation and make it sweeter when it comes. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things that are seen are temporal; but the things that are not seen are eternal." Earthly things are transient, heavenly things are permanent. In our immortal home, the former things will have passed away. This desolation shall give place to life and beauty; this loneliness to companionship; the sun of our hope may sink, but it shall rise in brighter day. The bright forms of loved ones vanish for a time from our sight, and the strong tides of our affection set back upon our own hearts until they well-nigh burst with grief. But the river they have passed will soon greet our vision; our feet must press its banks and the cold, chilly waves surround us; then we like them shall be clothed with immortality; the pent-up tides of affection shall find a channel, and those we loved on earth restored to us in heaven, shall receive them.

Then we shall know that while we mourned our loss,

"The star that set upon our earthly home
Had risen in glory, and in purer skies
Was shining! and the lamp we sorely missed,
Shed its soft radiance in a better home;
Our lamb was pasturing in heavenly meads;
Our dove had settled on the trees of life;
Another chord was ringing with delight,
Another spring of rapture was unsealed
In Paradise; our treasure was with God.ö

Our treasure still, but transferred to a safer home. We shall prove the bond of parent and child indissoluble, and draw them closer to us in a holier and more lasting affection.

"Why should we be dissatisfied with that kind precaution which housed our pleasant plant and removed into shelter a tender flower, before the thunder roared, before the lightnings flew; before the tempest poured its rage. Oh, remember! they are not lost, but taken from the evil to come." -- Hervey.

I once stood in a graveyard on the banks of a beautiful river; the old church where our fathers worshipped remained as a monument of the past. Trees and flowers made the scene one of enchanting beauty; but the speaking marble told us we lingered in the city of the dead. A Christian man who had passed the prime of life beckoned us, and we followed as he led the way. Soon we stood by the graves of his two sons. One had died in infancy, and the other when just

emerging into manhood. We found no words to express our sympathy; no sympathy expressed would have been adequate to assuage the good man's grief. In silence he arranged a bouquet of flowers and evergreens and placed it on the graves. His manly form shook with emotion and the tears flowed fast. He lifted his eyes to heaven and uttered that beautiful saying of David, "But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

Immortality becomes the source of an unspeakable joy when we reflect that it will furnish us an arena for the development of our intellectual powers. The thought that death is an eternal sleep, that the mind must go out like an expiring taper, is distressing, and cramps and narrows the mental powers and gives us a low estimate of our being. The universe is infinite, but we are confined to the narrow limits of one small world, which can be traversed, measured, and weighed by man. There is an infinity of mystery above, beneath, and around us, but we may not attempt the solution in the short space of three score years and ten. "The stars that hold their festival around the midnight throne are set above the grasp of our limited faculties, and forever mock us with their unapproachable glory." We are imprisoned within narrow boundaries, and the soul that would rise and soar is bound down by an earthly clog that it would gladly leave and ascend unfettered and free. Sometimes we make great progress in intellectual attainments, and lay plans for the acquisition of knowledge, but death comes and all our cherished wishes are denied us, and our hopes are dashed to pieces like a frail vessel against the rocks. We have no language to depict adequately the darkness, gloom, and disappointment of human life, if death ends all. But all these are swept away by the glorious truth of immortality. The universe we wish to explore is infinite; so, in the direction of the future, is our being. The vast mystery we may attempt to solve, for there can be no end to our existence. We shall have increasing light and power. The material body that weighs us down shall be exchanged for a "spiritual body" adapted to immortality and life. The processes of thought and intellectual development commenced here but broken off by death may be continued under circumstances more congenial to rapid and permanent progress. The youth who has spent all his life in the acquisition of knowledge, and on the threshold of manhood is cut down by death, while academic honors are fresh upon his brow, has not wasted time, but may resume in the next world what was suspended in this.

The mind, by the transition, will in every respect be quickened and enlarged; ample scope will be given to our reasoning powers. Our all will not flow in at once. Progress seems at present a condition of happiness; so, we believe, in the eternal world, growth will be a condition and element of joy.

Immortality is essential to all the hopes and expectations inspired by true religion. Religion must find its consummation in immortality, or it can have none. Without it there is no heaven, no life; faith is but a shadow for which there is no substance, and hope has no fruition. "Religion without immortality is like an arch resting on one pillar, or a bridge ending in an abyss." But with it will come the realization of the brightest hopes that ever entered the heart of man; the accomplishment of the grandest conceptions of God for the elevation of his creature. It adds to man's dignity, connects him with boundless possibilities, and gives him a destiny as glorious as that of the angels. "As the thirsty hart panteth for the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. When shall I come and appear before God?" Let these desires burn on,

these hopes expand; they shall all be realized. That gracious Redeemer, whom we love, whose life of purity is the admiration of mankind, whose death and atonement are the hope of our race, whose teachings shed new lustre upon our history, and gave new splendor to our destiny, whose gospel brought life and immortality to light, shall welcome us to his presence, and lead us forth to new fountains of pleasure.

The comfort derived from the doctrine of immortality is all the comfort possessed by a large class. Hard toil and privation are their lot. Sometimes, where the conduct is virtuous and the character irreproachable, the aggregate of suffering is greater than the sum of happiness arising from mere physical life or social relations. The happiness they enjoy that makes life even tolerable arises from the hope of another life. They bear with fortitude the jlls that come, because the day is approaching when God shall make his ways equal, and his people shall be fully compensated for all they suffer in this life by that "exceeding great and eternal weight of glory." If we disconnect this world from the next, and take away all those hopes inspired by the religion of Christ, what have we left that makes life desirable? "There then remains no adequate motive for wishing to live, where the aggregate of misery exceeds the sum of human happiness." Thus it is shown that the hope of immortality is the basis of happiness and integrity. We shall live again. We shall be judged for the deeds done in the body.

It is the deep undercurrent of unbelief in the future state that impels so many men in these days to lay violent hands upon their own life. Financial difficulty, social disgrace, jealousy, the discovery of crime, adverse criticism, political disappointment, are driving men daily to commit suicide. In most instances they are not insane, but have lost faith in immortality. Doubts of fundamental religious truth have been instilled into the mind by science or philosophy, falsely so called, or by the gross utterances of blasphemous infidels. Some have come to believe themselves descendants of the brute, as only a higher order of brute; that their intelligence or thought is the result of organization, and that when the organism is destroyed mind will cease to be. Believing this, when the hour of trial comes they cannot stand, they prefer to suffer the momentary pang, and then sink oblivious to all mental or physical pain or moral obloquy.

"For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The aggressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin."

There is no time in our earthly life when the consoling power and truth of immortality come to us with such force and pertinency as in the hour of death. How rich and full of blessing it is to the soul who has a consciousness of purity through the blood of Christ! The dark shores of the world behind us, and the vast ocean of life before us. In that hour we feel the value of the teachings of the divine word. The soul itself gives evidence of her immortal nature. Her aspirations, anticipations, conscience, religious capacity and expansion, speak her birthright to the skies. The impulses of the life that reigns within, while the body is passing under the power of death, testify of the soul's immortal destiny.

'Tis the divinity that stirs within us;
'Tis heaven itself that points out an hereafter,
And intimates eternity to man."

These intimations are confirmed by the holy scriptures, and we are saved from harassing and conflicting doubts. In this we see the advantage of the Christian over the heathen. We have seen that some ancient heathen writers approached very near to the true idea of the soul and its immortality. The light they had must have been the remains of the primitive religion handed down by tradition, or a partial recovery of lost knowledge by the agency of more recent divine communications. But in either case it was vague and uncertain; they had no solid rock on which to stand, and they were doomed to endure fruitless struggle between hope and fear. We have felt pity for the learned and acute Aristotle, whose 1st words contained so much of truth, and such a plaintive cry for compassion: "I entered this world in impurity; I have lived in anxiety; I depart in perturbation of mind. Cause of causes, pity me." This is a great mind standing on the verge of eternity; struggling with mighty thoughts respecting its own destiny, and yet unable to grasp them, and equally unable to deliver itself from its own fears.

To this man the Hebrew prophets were unknown, or if known were not authoritative, and the voice of Jesus had not yet broken the spell of doubt. The sun of righteousness had not yet arisen with healing in his wings to dispel the darkness and heal the maladies of the human soul. What a contrast between this and the testimony of Paul! A man versed in all the learning of his day; whose mind could grasp the subtilties of the Greek and Roman philosophy; whose Jewish prejudices had been burned away by the fires of divine life; who accepted with all his soul Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of men. By the light that Jesus shed he could see through the mist; the mystery of his destiny was unravelled, and, standing upon the summit from which he surveyed both worlds, he said, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

This strong faith and hope did not die with the Apostolic age. Experiences equally grand, a faith equally sublime have been seen in every age of the Christian era. We have known of nothing more sublime in modern times than the death-bed scene of the late lamented Bishop Gilbert Haven. Death came to him in the midst of his honors and usefulness -- in the glory of his manhood; 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 did not forsake him. He had preached the supports of the Gospel to others: they stood the test of his dying hour. 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 another 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 at the close he said, "There is no river here; it is all beautiful." And thus the happy spirit passed into the heavens.

The last scenes in the life of Rev. John F. Chaplain, D. D., were not less glorious. He repeated, "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly; "and when admonished to speak less earnestly, he replied, "Let the world hear it; I must cry aloud." Some time before he died his countenance 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 awe, "Oh, 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 the struggling spirit left the tenement of clay; stepped into the waiting chariot and was gone with the angels. Thus the grace of God is abundant in the support of the mighty champions of the cross, but it is equally adapted and not less signally manifested to the pure but timid disciple.

Mrs. Mary Hershey Stout, of Columbia, Pa., who recently died, witnessed a good confession and glorified God in her death. Her unwavering faith, glorious hope and complete triumph were a fitting close to her life of purity and devotion. She said, "I am going; He saves me; He saves me; yes, in the valley He saves me!" Then, lifting her hands in holy ecstasy, she exclaimed, "Glory to the Lamb! Glory to the great I am!!" As this exclamation died upon her lips the spirit took its flight and joined the ransomed hosts of the heavenly world.

These are illustrations of the power of God to sustain in the dying hour, and they show the hope and comfort which the soul may have from a firm faith in God and an abiding conviction of the soul's immortality.

"WHEN THIS MORTAL SHALL PUT ON IMMORTALITY."
By Miss Sarah K. Miner

See the frail form that sinks beneath disease,
The stricken soul earth's pleasures cease to please,
Health has departed; and that laboring breath,
Those fluttering pulses rest not but in death.
Yet feeble nature shrinks instinctively
From him, our ancient, dreaded enemy.
But what though terrors darken round his brow,
Rememberest thou not death is vanquished now?
Servile he stands to do the victor's will,
And only dares his mandates to fulfil.

Fear not to enter then that silent shade:
There shall thy mortal part in peace be laid,
Till God shall on that great eventful day
His saints with immortality array.
Oh! who can guess that change supremely grand,
When the once wasted form thus clothed shall stand,
Feeling the inextinguishable flame
Of life and vigorous health through all her frame.
A holy dignity appears there now,
And brilliant beauty beams upon that brow;
Every awakened sense drinks in delight;
Visions of gladness burst upon the sight,
Whilst purest fragrance fills the calm bright air
That bathes so soothingly all beings there,
And every gentle breeze wafts to the ear
Deep tones of harmony soft, rich and clear.
Now youth returns with holy joyousness
The so long torpid bosom to possess,
Bidding the heart to glow with feelings fraught,
Bidding the mind awake to active thought.
For a bold intellect, once so confined,
Expanding, brightening, for high deeds designed,
Possesses the fair chambers once its own,
All now to palaces of beauty grown--
Fitted for treasures earth could never yield
But to be gathered from all Heaven's fair field;
For knowledge there displays her boundless worth,
Few are her scattered gems that reach our earth.
Oh! with what joyous haste and bounding tread
Goes that bright being forth to duty led,
Exulting in her immortality.
Wandering from realm to realm as far and free
As though no binding tie were felt or owned;
Yet mid that boundless empire, high enthroned,
Dwells the pure source of being, action's spring.
The light and joy of every living thing
That moves mid that well ordered, active scene.
Our time and distance cannot intervene
To dim our glance of deep, adoring love,
Nor check the waves of mighty thought that move
Toward him; whose power alone can thus supply
The gracious gift of immortality.
Gift bought for man by toil and grief and loss,
By bitter agonies upon the cross,
Secured through ages of eternity.
For Jesus won o'er death the victory.

* * * * *

09 -- HEAVEN THE HOME OF THE BLESSED DEAD

Zion is our home;
Jerusalem, the city of our God.
O happy home! O happy children here!
O blissful mansions of our Father's house!
O walks surpassing Eden for delight!
Here are the harvests reap'd once sown in tears;
Here is the rest by ministry enhanced;
Here is the banquet of the wine of heaven,
Riches of glory incorruptible,
Crowns, amaranthine crowns of victory,
The voice of harpers, harping on their harps,
The anthems of the holy cherubim,
The crystal river of the Spirit's joy,
The Bridal palace of the Prince of Peace,
The Holiest of the Holies--God is here. -- Bickersteth.

An inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.. -- Peter.

And the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it. -- John.

The state of the pious dead is a subject that has occupied the attention of the virtuous and thoughtful in every age. Many questions arise in the mind concerning them. Where are they? What is their employment? Who are their associates? These questions cannot be answered with any degree of satisfaction without the aid of divine revelation. "One of the most painful pangs in bereavement by death is the utter and absolute severance without a spark of intelligence of the departed. One hour, life is blest by their presence; the next, it is entirely and forever gone from us, never to be heard of more. One word, one utterance -- how precious in that moment of anguish do we feel that it would be! But we are certain it never will be granted us." -- Dean Alford. "We question, but there is no reply. Out on the wide waste seas there drifts no spar. Over the desert of death the sphinx gazes forever, but never speaks." Whence, then, shall we go for information? The speculations of men are vain, and the dead are beyond the realm of science. History furnishes us an account of the beliefs of men in regard to the state of the dead, but a veil of impenetrable mystery hangs between us and them, which cannot be lifted but by him who is from everlasting to everlasting.

The idea of a place of happiness for the soul after death has been co-extensive with the idea of immortality. It is found in the mind of the rude savage and in the mythologies of the cultured nations of antiquity. Those unenlightened by divine revelation spoke of the dead as having gone to the gods; and their abodes were beautified in their imaginations with every possible adornment and filled with every possible pleasure. "Human fancy has never combined

scenery of loveliness and beauty equal to their Elysian fields, Hesperian gardens, and Islands of the Blest."13 One of England's most eminent poets has clothed the American Indian's hope in its most attractive garb.

"Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutored mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;
His soul proud science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk, or milky way;
Yet simple nature to his hope has given,
Behind the cloud-topped hill, a humbler heaven;
Some safer world in depth of woods embraced,
Some happier island in the watery waste,
Where slaves once more their native land behold,
No fiend's torment, no Christian's thirst for gold;
To be, contents his natural desire,
He asks no angel's wing, no seraph's fire;
But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company."14

The Bible corroborates, deepens, and guides these instinctive yearnings of the soul, and comes to us with the most positive declarations and rational promises of happiness and felicity in the future world.

As believers in the Bible and followers of Christ, we have nothing to do with the heaven of the ancients, either Greeks, Romans, or Barbarians, but the longings of all hearts furnish presumptive evidence that a home for the good and virtuous after death, filled with noblest pleasures and employments, entered into the plans of our Creator. The sensual heaven of the Koran or the successive ascensions of spiritists do not commend themselves to the pure and intelligent mind, and it is worse than folly, and revolting to every sensitive soul, to inquire of muttering mediums as to the relations and conditions of the pious dead. We must not expect that any human hand can withdraw the veil, or any human mind pierce it, so as to reveal the invisible and spiritual. But we turn with confidence to the scriptures, and find that they are consistent and reasonable, presenting a heaven that is pure in its nature, associations, and employments, and gloriously sublime in all its pursuits. It commends itself to our reason as a fitting consummation of our earthly life, all that we could desire for the life of eternity. Such a place of perfection and beauty fitly crowns the divine dispensations towards man, and is worthy of a God.

He who came down from heaven to die for men, who has known all the secrets of the universe from eternity, has told us in simple and beautiful language of the fact of a home in heaven for all his faithful followers. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." This must be entirely satisfactory to all who regard Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of men. The same thought is expressed in the remarkable prayer of Jesus, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given

me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." That the saints shall be with Christ after death, no one can doubt. The answer of our Lord to the dying thief, who prayed, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom," shows it. "Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." And the words of St. Paul, "To depart and to be with Christ."

It is not surprising that men who think profoundly, as well as men of lesser minds, should differ widely in their conceptions of heaven. We are likely to be controlled in our ideas by our condition here, and to hope for the opposite of that which has caused us the severest pangs on earth. When Robert Hall was asked to give his opinion of what heaven is, he replied: "Heaven is a place of rest." He had suffered much physical pain all his lifetime, and this made him long for a place and state where bodily ills are unknown. Rowland Hill was asked the same question, and he replied: "Heaven is a place of peace." He had been a great polemic; impelled by a burning zeal for God, he had been a man of strife. He longed for a home where brethren would dwell together in unity and peace.

Heaven will be a place of rest. Rest from all that brings weariness, from sin and temptation. "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth, Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." "The former things" will have passed away when we enter upon that perfect state of blessedness. The laborer shall rest, the soldier shall cease to fight, the pilgrim shall be at home.

The ills endured in the earthly life shall be more than compensated by opposite good. The weak shall become strong, the hungry shall be filled, the blind shall see, the deaf shall hear, the dumb shall speak, and every face and form shall be heavenly and divine.

It shall be a place of peace. There shall be no more conflict, internal or external. Every soul shall be in harmony with God and with its surroundings. God shall reign as an absolute sovereign, and moral and physical evil shall not be known in heaven. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." Thus by contrast with earth are the perfections of heaven seen.

But not only by contrast may we see the glories of the celestial world, but from another standpoint -- this life clearly foreshadows what the next life may be. God intended that man should make this earth a type of his heavenly home -- a dim and distant shadow of the city that hath foundations. Every epoch of time, and every generation of living beings, have in some sort been types of things that were to follow. So in the earthly life we see a shadow of good things to come. Here we have social relations, strong and pure; to sever them is like drying up the fountains of human joy. We have friendships where human souls harmoniously blend, and its manifestation is like music from the celestial world. Here we have a community of interests, and often extend the helping hand to add to the enjoyment of others. We study and experiment, investigate and learn. It is true these things are as transient as the bubble on the wave. But may we not look through the transient to the permanent and abiding? These will exist in heaven. There will be an infinite extension and expansion of these social relations, taking in their sweep the pure of all ages and climes, without the poisonous breath of sin or the restrictive hand of time. Friendship will deepen and extend from age to age, unmarred by loss of gold or mists of

error, and unbroken by death. The soul unclogged by mortality shall pursue her thought unmolested, and knowledge shall grow without decay.

I can see all these through what God has given us here. Conversion does not change the constitution of the soul, neither will transfer by death. We can therefore use this world as a basis from which to survey the next; and the pure enjoyments of this life as a medium through which to view those of the world to come. With the absence of all that hinders development and mars our joy, and with the presence of all that promotes purity, growth, and permanency, without the addition of one new power, heaven will be heaven indeed. I know of no better illustration of this thought than a simple expression which fell from the lips of a godly man. Through perseverance and industry he had been able to build himself a house. But his chief boast was, that from his fireside he could see his father's house on the distant hill. "No matter the weather," said he, "whether winter or summer, spring or autumn; no matter the sky, whether cloudless or stormy, when I sit by my east window, father's roof and chimney-tops, the gleam of his lamp at night, are always visible to my sight."¹⁵ We lose much by looking on the dark side of life, and thinking that earth contains no emblem of heaven. Happy is the man who can pierce the clouds of social darkness that surround his earthly home, and see his Father's house with its many mansions in the distant heaven.

Much of the happiness of heaven will consist in our seeing and knowing our blessed Lord and Saviour. We shall see him, and know him in a sense which is impossible to us now. Our minds are now feeble, and our language very imperfect. "Now we see through a glass darkly." Our vision of Christ now, with such imperfect perceptions, is dimmed and distorted. "But then face to face." We shall then see the living features, the eye that beams forth in everlasting love, the lips that move; and we shall hear words that will inspire both angels and men. "Nearness to him that made us, union with him who redeemed us, the everlasting and unvexed company of him who sanctified us: what glory, what dignity, what happiness can be imagined for man greater than this?" -- Alford.

Let us now examine the holy scriptures, and see what revelations God has made to some of our fellow-men. Only a few of our race have been favored with a sight of the "evergreen shore." Some glorious revelations were made to St. Paul, but he was reticent about them. He was "caught up to the third heaven," "and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." The revelation was so exalted, no human language was adequate or worthy to set forth what had been heard in the sacred presence of God; and, perhaps, no earthly ear could intelligently receive the communication.

The Apostle John received a vision of the eternal city. Perhaps not as sublime as that of St. Paul, but better adapted to human comprehension and wants. It was designed by God to be instructive to his Church, and John was commanded to write what he saw. The grand and glowing description which he gives of the worship in the celestial world is elevating and inspiring in the extreme; and it has special adaptation to us inasmuch as the worshippers consist of the redeemed who have passed the boundaries of time, and whose state we are now contemplating. "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and the Lamb, clothed

with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." Rev. vii. 9, 10.

The scene of this vision is laid in the temple of the Most High, the palace of angels and of God. Of this vast temple our ideas must be very imperfect. There is no study more suggestive of humility to man than modern astronomy. I do not suppose that inspiration revealed to David the wonders of the sky as they are known to us, but his exclamation is significant: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him?" We must always find some material husk in which to embody our conceptions of the spiritual and divine. So we must form ideas of the unseen in the material universe by that which is seen; yet human language is inadequate to the expression or representation of heavenly things.

We know of no figures by which to represent the temple of God, either its glory or its magnitude. The feeblest mind that has no numerals for the fingers upon the hand, and the mind that solves the profoundest problems in science, are alike confounded in the presence of the infinite. But when we think of the temple of God as forming some part of the material universe, we may judge of its glory and extent by the portions that are known to us. Did our Saviour have in view the worlds that float in space when he said, "In my Father's house are many mansions?" Contemplate them; there is no limit. The unassisted eye can take in thousands, and the best telescope devised by the genius of man, that dissolves the nebula into stars, will reveal hundreds of millions. The magnitudes, distances, and motions of the heavenly bodies are bewildering to the human mind. The sun that appears but a small disk upon our heavens is thirteen hundred thousand times larger than our earth, and the rays of light that fall upon our eyes to-night from some of the fixed stars, left those orbs thousands of years ago. These are all the handywork of God. "Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their hosts... and thou preservest them all, and the host of heaven worshippeth thee." It is a beautiful thought to regard, as some have done, this world and the vast concave above as the temple of God; the sun, moon, and stars as lamps hung out for light; and the noise of running streams and falling cataracts, the ebb and flow of ocean tides, as one grand symphony of praise forever ascending up to God. But this must be infinitely short of the glory of the temple above. The glories of the celestial dominions are beyond the human imagination. The vast regions of space seem filled with the splendors of the Deity, and crowded with the monuments of his power. In this great profusion of worlds we may not be able to locate the heaven of the redeemed; but, where the divine Being manifests his glory, where the throne of God and the Lamb is, where the river of life flows, there is the temple of the Most High, the masterpiece of God's great work. Every description given, every figure used, is of the highest order: intended to convey ideas of beauty, permanency, and glory. Its streets are paved with gold, its sea throws back the rays of glory that fall upon it as though it were a sea of glass; the walls are built of jewels, and the gates are solid pearls.

John's vision of the heavenly inhabitants was given at an opportune time, for we conceive of events of greater or less interest in the Church triumphant as in the Church militant. Christ had ascended, his redemptive work was completed, and a celebration of this grand fact was held, and angels and men were summoned around the eternal throne. Men redeemed out of all "nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and the Lamb. And all

the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts (or living beings), and fell before the throne on their faces and worshipped God." -- Rev. vii. 11.

The relative position of angels and men in heaven is not an important question: in the order of this vision men stand first. It seems right that in the celebration of redemption they should first break the silence of heaven. Angels were only the students of the theory and history of redemption; but men were subjects of it. They had tasted the sweets of redeeming love. Then let Michael, and Gabriel, and Uriel fold their wings, unstring their harps, and close their lips, and let the first song of redemption burst forth from the lips of immortal men, "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." As we look upon the multitude of happy spirits in their purity and glory, does the question arise, "Whence came they?" as though there were a doubt as to their ever having had any connection with our earth. But the Bible treats of no world but heaven, earth, and hell. And the angel answers, "These are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

We recognize this blood-washed throng as our kindred; they belong to our race; they bear the marks of their former earthly condition. They were once sinful, or they would have had no need of washing. If sinful, they were suffering, for these two are inseparable. What a flood of light this vision of John throws upon the destiny of our race! Generation after generation had passed into the shades of the unknown, but here they reappear above the horizon of eternity. These are the loved ones that past generations mourned as lost. They were not lost, but translated to another sphere. They were not, for God took them. They were once as we are now, inhabitants of the earth, mingling with such scenes as are common to us. They loved and longed, they hoped and feared, they wept and sung as we do, yet now are they in the vast temple of God in heaven, and they serve him day and night. They went forth to duty amid the heat of the summer's sun and the cold of the winter's snows. They tossed their aching heads upon a sleepless pillow, and watched the weary hours go slowly away. They felt the pangs of ill-requited love, the bitterness of disappointment, and the depression of physical weakness and disease. The pictures painted by hope were washed away with tears.

"Once they were mourners here below,
And poured out cries and tears;
They wrestled hard as we do now
With sins, and doubts, and fears."

But what a mighty change have they experienced! They are now in the "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." They have left the storms of earth behind them, they stand before the throne. They are pure, washed in the blood of the Lamb. They are triumphant. The white robes with which they are clothed are significant of their victory; the palms they bear denote the eternal festival upon which they have entered.

We must not regard this picture of the heavenly host as perfected. It has been much increased since John saw it. It is increasing now. The train of the blessed as they enter heaven is an endless festal line; they come and come without cessation. "These are the ones coming" (Lange); it belongs to the present and the future, as well as the past.

Has not the multitude been increased by some from our households? Have we not some precious children standing before the throne, unfolding their beauties and powers to the great Eternal, as the rose-bud opens to the warmth of the morning sun? Have we not a brother or sister whose sun went down before it reached the meridian? Have we not a husband or wife who fell by the destroyer in the prime of life? Have we not a father or mother whose sainted heads were laid to rest after a full life spent in the service of the Saviour? They are now among the shining ones. Ah, ye loved and sainted dead! You left our unwilling hearts and homes, and crossed the eternal abyss. We looked into the grave, and you were not there; we searched the universe in vain to gain some clue to your abiding place, until we took the inspired word and looked to the everlasting hills, when, lo! we found you before the eternal throne! Sing on, loved kindred; tune your harps anew, until we join your ranks and swell the chorus of your song.

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10 -- THE RECOGNITION OF FRIENDS IN HEAVEN

[By the late Rev. R. Nelson]16

Matt. viii. 11. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

Luke iii. 29. And they shall come from the east and from the west, and from the north and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.

Few remarks are more trite than that man is a social being. Love and fear, the necessities and conveniences of existence, will drive men together, in larger or smaller circles, notwithstanding their wide diversities of disposition and culture. Commerce, the arts, law, history, and language itself, are only manifestations of this universal characteristic. Isolation is artificial. It does violence to our nature. Removed from human intercourse man is withdrawn from the atmosphere which all must breathe to live. For a hermit to be happy or useful is an impossibility. There is poetry and sound philosophy in the lines,

ôO yes, Lorenzo, the remark was shrewd,
How sweet, pure, passing sweet, is solitude!
but grant me still a friend in my retreat,
To whom to whisper, solitude is sweet."

The questions arise, Is this pervading element of our nature extinguished by death? or does the love of society survive the grave? and if so, under what circumstances will it be manifested?

If I mistake not the import of the Saviour's language in our text, it distinctly teaches that life in heaven is social; that saints are not isolated but have their enjoyments in common. This presupposes, of course, recognition in heaven. And why shall we not indulge "the pleasing hope, the fond desire" of renewing in that better world the fellowship of kindred hearts broken off here by the stern mandate of death? Why should we not expect to meet and commune with those with

whom we have taken sweet counsel here as we have walked together through the checkered lanes of life's weary pilgrimage? Friendship, pure, warm, disinterested, and founded upon religious principles, is not a flower of earth, frail as it is beautiful, rising up before us like an oasis in the desert to refresh and gladden our fainting spirits, and then leave us to mourn over its faded loveliness, in all the bitterness of disappointed hope. No, it is a plant of heavenly origin, and though frequently made to bend before the blasts and storms of this uncongenial clime, yet when transplanted into the paradise above, where there is purer air, a softer sky, a never-setting sun, it shall flourish in immortal youth and beauty. Shall this reasonable expectation, then, of meeting once more with the loved and lost of earth, 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. How far out future blessedness will depend on the knowledge and society of our Christian friends it is impossible for us to determine, but it is reasonable to suppose that it will be greatly augmented by the holy fellowship and converse of those kindred spirits in whose presence we delighted to dwell, and by whose side we loved to linger here.

But before entering upon our Scripture proofs we wish to answer two or three plausible objections to this doctrine.

And first: It is alleged that the love of Christ will employ our affections so entirely and eternally in heaven that we shall have no desire or time for the society of our sainted friends, and that the indulgence of such a desire would be a disparagement to Christ.

It is true that to be with Christ, to behold his glory, and to enjoy his love, is the chief attraction of the heavenly world, but the Scriptures nowhere countenance the idea that we shall do nothing there but stand like statues and gaze at him. While the lamb is the bright and glorious centre in whom all the rays of heavenly love meet, He is at the same time the Sun which warms, animates and enlivens all the social circle of the saints that surround him. While the saints love him in the light and life of that love which he sheds around him, they also see each other more clearly and love each other more in the same blessed light; just as the brightness which marks the natural sun itself so prominent to our view is the means at the same time of enabling us to see and know the objects around us. His presence there no more destroys the social life and love of heaven than the sun conceals the objects of earth from our view. The greater most assuredly includes the less, and how attachments among the saints in heaven can prove a disparagement to Christ or hinder their love to him any more than here on earth (and we are exhorted to love one another with a pure heart fervently) is to me wholly unaccountable. As well might it be urged that for children to love one another ardently will interfere with or hinder their loving their parents.

But again, an objection to this doctrine has been founded on Christ's answer to the Sadducees, when they asked him whose wife she should be in the resurrection, who had been the wife of seven. The answer of the Saviour was: "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." Matt. xxii. 29, 30. All that is asserted here is that in heaven they

do not marry; it is by no means said or intimated that they do not know each other. The difficulty with which the Sadducees sought to embarrass the doctrine of the resurrection, which they denied, would have been effectually met at once by simply denying the doctrine of heavenly recognition, and we may suppose that the Saviour would have done so were it not true. He could have said to them, Your objection amounts to nothing, for there is no knowledge of acquaintances, and no extension of earthly ties beyond the grave. He does not, however, resort to this mode of silencing them. He does not say that they shall not know each other. On the contrary, his answer seems to imply recognition. It is as if he had said, What though this woman has had successively seven husbands and she shall meet and recognize them all in the resurrection. The fact does not all embarrass the doctrine of the resurrection, for the sexual relation is not perpetuated in heaven; they neither marry nor are given in marriage, nor is there any necessity, for the former things will have passed away, they do not die in heaven, but are as the angels of God. This idea is more clearly favored by the phraseology in which Luke records the Saviour's answer: "Neither can they die any more, for they are equal to the angels."

But again, it has been objected to this doctrine, that if we shall know our friends in heaven, we shall miss some that will not be there, and this, it has been thought, would introduce pain and distress into heaven. Now the difficulty we have in fully clearing away this objection lies in the fact that our instinctive feelings come in to obscure the judgment and hinder the force of argument. It is not so much our minds as our feelings that give us trouble on this point. Let it, however, be distinctly understood that no objection, however formidable it may seem, can of itself, prove this or any other doctrine of the Bible untrue. God is master of all difficulties, and though we may not be able to see how they can be removed, God can and will remove them. And then, if raising objections is a legitimate way of deciding a question, we may retort the same objection with more force against those who believe that we shall not know one another in heaven; for we may say according to their theory, we shall not know whether our parents and our children are there, and that will disturb the quiet and satisfaction of the mind in heaven.

But to argue in such a manner is to confound heaven with earth. There are different ways in which the ground of the objection we are considering may reasonably be supposed to be removed.

In death all ties which are not sanctified, and thus made eternal by the life and power of grace, must be dropped and left behind. All ties between saints and sinners are of this kind, and must perish in death. The ties between husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister, that are of the earth, earthy, unsanctified by the power of divine grace, must meet the fate of all earthly things: they will perish in death. When the pious mother dies, her instinctive attachment to her ungodly children dies with her, and ties that are sanctified between her and her pious children are the only ties toward offspring that she carries with her to the eternal world. So of all ties between the pious and the wicked.

All the relations and affinities in which a saint of God may have stood to one of "flesh and blood," who bears only "the image of the earthy," will be broken off and left behind in death, and consequently can never become a source of pain and trouble in heaven.

This answer to the objection under consideration we are sure would be conclusive to all, were it not for the rising of natural feelings over reason and faith, while we yet know but in part. This weakness of faith, and its disposition to flow in the channel of natural instinctive feeling, may more or less attend us through life; but we are sure that none of these painful yearnings will follow us through the swellings of Jordan into the land of holy love and pure society.

And there is another answer to the objection -- it is this: when at the bar of God, in the clear light of eternity, we shall come to see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, we shall feel instinctively to recoil from it and all with which it stands connected. Here in this life the cords of natural affection become weakened between pious and ungodly relatives, by great excesses and enormities of crime.

But let us turn to the sure word of prophecy. Examining the Bible carefully from beginning to end, we find nothing whatever that conflicts with this belief. But on the other hand, all the conceptions of heaven suggested by the Bible favor the idea of future recognition. The church triumphant is frequently described under the beautiful simile of a family, and it is one that awakens in the breast the tenderest feelings and sweetest reminiscences. A family separated on earth by death, but brought to a glorious reunion in heaven. Again, they are represented as citizens, fellow-citizens, freely intermingling, and, we naturally infer, recognizing each other. There are several passages in the Old Testament scriptures that clearly imply this doctrine of recognition and reunion. Thus it is said, "Abraham gave up the ghost and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people." Now this being gathered to his people cannot refer to the interment of his body, for the account of his burial is given in the next verse as a distinct thing. Besides, his body was not gathered to his people, for all his relatives were buried some hundreds of miles distant from the cave of Machpelah, where Abraham's body was deposited, some of them in Chaldea, and some in Mesopotamia. In like manner Aaron is said to have been gathered unto his people at his death, although he was buried on Mount Hor, in the wilderness, far away from all his kindred. Moses, also, whose grave no man ever saw, is still said to have been "gathered unto his people." The meaning of this phrase, "gathered unto his people," manifestly is, that their immortal spirits joined the society of their redeemed kindred in heaven, and it is the same as the New Testament expression, "carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom," or "to join the general assembly and church of the first-born," or "to depart and to be with Christ."

Again the doctrine of recognition is clearly implied by the manner in which David comforts himself on the occasion of the death of his infant child. "But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." 2 Sam. xii. 23. But what comfort would all that be to David, whose heart was wrung with anguish at the loss of his child, if he should not be permitted to recognize him in heaven? But oh, what a solace does such an assurance bring!

"Look upward, and your child you'll see
Fixed in his blest abode;
Who would not, therefore, childless be,
To give a child to God?"

The child is not lost but gone before, and shall be restored again to the parent's bosom in tenfold greater beauty and promise. The relation of parent and child does not cease with the death of one, or the other, or both. A sweet little girl of seven was dying. Just before her translation her father said to her: "My child, you will not be less mine in heaven than you are on earth." "More yours, papa!" was the ready response. Beautiful, and true as beautiful, was that reply -- prompted doubtless by divine intuition.

"O when a mother meets on high
The child she lost in infancy,
The day of woe, the watchful night,
For all her sorrows and her tears,
An over-payment of delight?"

Jesus says, "they are equal to the angels." And, also, "Their angels do always behold the face of my Father in heaven."

The beautiful and touching words of Moultrie, in his poem of "The Three Sons," will find an echo in the hearts of many who have been called to part with a portion of the family while oome remain; when the destiny of one is fixed, and that of the other hangs in doubt."

I have a son, a third, sweet son; his age I cannot tell,
For they reckon not by yeara or months where he is gone to dwell.
To us, for fourteen anxious months, his infant smiles were given,
And then he bade farewell to earth, and went to live in heaven.
I cannot tell what form is his, what looks he weareth now,
Nor guess how bright a glory crowns his shining seraph brow.
The thoughts that fill his sinless soul, the bliss which he doth feel,
Are numbered with the secret things which God will not reveal.
But I know (for God hath told me this) that he is now at rest,
Where other blessed infants be, on their loving Saviour's breast.
I know his spirit feels no more this weary load of flesh,
But his sleep is blessed with endless dreams of joy forever fresh,
I know the angels fold bill close beneath their glittering wings,
And soothe him with a Bong that breathes of heaven's divinest things.
I know that we shall meet our babe (his mother dear and I),
When God for aye shall wipe away all tears from every eye.
Whate'er befalls his brethren twain his bliss can never cease;
Their lot may hcre be grief and fear, but his is certain peace.
It may be that the tempter's wiles their souls from bliss may sever,
But if our own poor faith fail not, he must be ours forever.
When we think of what our darling is, and what we still must be,
When we muse on that world's perfect bliss, and this world's misery;
When we groan beneath this load of sin, and feel this grief and pain;
Oh I we'd rather lose our other two than have him here again."

Turning to the New Testament scriptures for testimony in relation to the doctrine in question, we find it plainly implied in the language that passed between Abraham and Dives: "But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted and thou art tormented. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." Luke xvi. 25, 27, 28. But again the doctrine of recognition in the future world receives additional confirmation from what the Saviour has said as to the process of the final judgment. "For I was a hungered, and ye gave me meat." "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." See Matthew xxv. 31-45. Here there is beyond doubt a recognition, on the part of the righteous, of those to whom their offices of kindness and charity had been extended; and on the part of the wicked, of those from whom they had withheld such offices.

But, again, the heavenly banquet brought to view in the words of Christ clearly teaches the same truth. "And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." Matthew viii. 11. "And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God." Luke xiii. 29. It is implied here as clearly as language can imply it.

If assured by an authoritative proclamation that we should meet at a national banquet, and sit down with Washington, Adams, and Jefferson, no one would think for a moment that these distinguished personages would not be known and recognized there; and especially if the proclamation conveyed the idea that their presence would give interest and importance to the occasion. And most assuredly the proclamation, in the words of Jesus above quoted, speaking of the presence of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, gives unspeakable interest to the reunion of the many as they come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south to their heavenly home in our Father's house above.

Again, if on the mount of transfiguration the disciples knew Moses and Elias, who had already been a thousand years in glory, will not all disciples know them, and know one another when they stand on Mount Zion? When Paul said to his Thessalonian converts, "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" "We must believe that he confidently expected to recognize them amid the throng of the redeemed before the throne.

Oh, I bless God that the idea of the reunion and recognition of Christian friends in heaven is so clearly implied and authorized by the word of God. For it is an idea that seems to be instinctive in the human soul and inseparable from its very constitution. The desire is so strong, so natural, so innocent, so intimately connected with our highest and holiest feelings, and binds us so closely with invisible and eternal realities, that even, if not so clearly implied in the Bible, it could not be wrong to indulge it. Good men in all ages of the church have entertained it. Cyprian, who wrote in the third century, said: We believe Paradise to be our fatherland; a great host of beloved friends await us there. Why should we not haste and fly to greet them? There

are our parents, brethren, children, who are secure in a blessed immortality, and, only concerned for us, are looking with earnest desire for our arrival."

In the fourth century Chrysostom speaks thus: "If we hear and obey what Paul says here, we shall certainly see him hereafter; if not as standing near him, yet see him we certainly shall, glistening near the throne of the King. Where the cherubim sing the glory, where the seraphim are flying, there shall we see Paul, both as a chief and leader of the choir of the saints, and we shall enjoy his generous love forever."

Passing on to the period of the Reformation, I cannot forbear quoting the language of the great German reformer, who, the evening before his death, being asked what he thought on this subject, remarked as follows: " How did Adam do? He had never in his life seen Eve -- he lay and slept -- yet when he awoke he did not say, Whence came you? who are you? but he said, This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. How did he know that this woman did not spring from the ground? He knew it because he was filled with the Holy Spirit, and in possession of the true knowledge of God. Into this knowledge and image we shall again in the future life be renewed in Christ; so that we shall know father, mother, and one another on sight better than did Adam and Eve."

"I must confess," says the sainted Baxter, "as the experience of my own soul, that the expectation of loving my friends in heaven principally kindles 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."

Such have been the sentiments and feelings of the vast majority of Christians in every portion and period of the world. And how precious to the worn and wearied spirit of the Christian pilgrim is this hope of reunion in the land of the blest! It rolls away the dark clouds of sorrow which gather around the soul, and fills it with joy and peace through believing. It enables the afflicted child of God to look beyond the Jordan of death to those bright mansions in the skies where dwell the pure in heart, and triumphantly exclaim:

"I feel that, however long to me
The slumber of the grave may be,
I shall know them again mid the countless throng
Who shall bear their part in the seraphim's long."

That it shall be thus is evident from the very nature of heaven, which all must admit is a state of infinite perfection and bliss. If memory shall not be defective, if knowledge shall not be abridged in heaven, then the dearest ties which we form on earth will not, cannot be buried in everlasting forgetfulness.

A lovely and precious child lost her mother at an age too early to fix the features of her dear parent in her remembrance. The child was as frail as beautiful, and her friends saw that she

must soon pass away. She would lie upon the lap of the friend who took a mother's care of her, and throwing her wasted arm around the neck of that dear friend would say: "Now tell me all about my dear mother." And when the oft-told tale had been repeated she would say: "Take me into the parlor now; I want to see my mother," and would lie for hours contentedly gazing on her portrait. At last the trying hour came; the dew of death was already on the flower, as its life-sun was going down. All at once a brightness as if from the upper world burst over the child's countenance, the eyelids flashed open, the lips parted, and she looked piercingly into space. "Mother!" she cried, with a transport in her tone, and passed with a sweet smile into her mother's bosom.

Perhaps there is nothing on earth that affords greater joy than the reunion of dear friends after a long and painful separation. I will not attempt to describe the feelings of the fond mother who has been compelled to mourn over the absence of her only son, a sailor boy, far away upon the tempestuous ocean. Wearisome days and nights were, indeed, appointed to her; every gust of wind and every flash of lightning that penetrated her lonely dwelling convulsed her very soul, as she pictured to her excited imagination the yawning gulf and the unfathomable abyss of the ocean, into which she feared the object of her deep solicitude had sunk to rise no more. And when, after many years of separation, she found her boy alive, what tongue can tell the rapture of that moment when she heard his well-known voice and grasped in her fond embrace the dearest idol of her heart! How unspeakably great, then, how inconceivably rapturous will be the joy of the redeemed and glorified, when they shall be permitted to meet and welcome to their own bright and blissful abode those whom they have loved and left for a while in this vale of tears!

"A while in flesh disjoined,
Our friends that went before
We soon in Paradise shall find,
And meet to part no more.
In yon thrice happy seat,
Waiting for us they are,
And thou shalt there a husband meet,
And I a parent there."

Blessed be God, the sanctified intimacies of earth shall be renewed and perpetuated in the everlasting home of the redeemed. There unspeakably joyful will be the meeting and recognition of those who have taken sweet counsel together, devoutly united in prayer and sacred song, and have been companions in tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. And oh, what heart will then be large enough for the rapture of a successful minister of Jesus Christ, or a Sunday-school teacher, meeting and recognizing many who have been won to Christ by their instrumentality! On earth they went forth weeping, bearing precious seed, but now they come home to the heavenly Zion with rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them. Who can fathom the depth of joy in the hearts of parents who shall stand before the divine Saviour with all their sons and daughters, and say: "Here am I, Lord, and those whom thou hast given me!"

But who is the Friend of all others in heaven that we most desire to see? Our elder brother, Christ the Lord. He who though rich for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. He whose love for us can only be measured by his profound

condescension, descending from a throne to a cross, from the highest bliss to the deepest agony, from the adoration of angels to the scoff of mortals, whose death for us was the seal of an infinite love, whose resurrection was the putting forth of his own divine energy, the gracious pledge of our redemption from the power of the grave, and whose ascension was the triumphant return of an Almighty Conqueror to the empire of heaven, there to prepare mansions for all his followers." That where I am," said Jesus, "there ye may be also." What a privilege! What glory! to behold the King in his beauty and dwell forever where the smile of the Lord is the feast of the soul; where the noontide of glory eternally rolls! Jesus called his disciples "friends." "Henceforth I call you not servants, but friends." "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.ö In heaven Christ will immediately commune with us. Here we know but in part; we see only through a glass darkly; then it will be face to face. But if even here, so far from the abode of blessedness, God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, what will be the fulness of the effulgence in that city where there is no need of the sun nor of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God is the light thereof, a light whose orb never sinks beneath the celestial horizon, but shines on in unfading brightness forever and forever. If Peter thought it good to linger on the mount of transfiguration: how will he and all the saints of God feel on Mount Zion above, over which no cloud ever settles and from which they shall never descend? If the same apostle could say, "In whom though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice, with joy unspeakable and full of glory," what will be his and our joy when we see him as he is, and he shall talk with us as a man talketh with his friend? If "unspeakable and full of glory" now, whose tongue can tell what it will be then, when we shall be permitted to stand side by side with the Lord Jesus, to walk with him in light and in holy fellowship and to lean upon his breast!

At a feast given by Cyrus the Persian to the chief officers of his army, he gave to some of them costly gifts; to one a splendid garment; to another a golden cup; but Chrysantes, his favorite friend, he merely drew to himself and kissed him. So at the heavenly reunion banquet, not the white robe, not the harp or the crown of gold will be most prized, but the privilege of sitting down at the table of our Lord and receiving the token of his approval, and hearing from his own lips the assurance of his love. To that banquet will be summoned not only the pious friends whom we have known and loved on earth, but

ôThe saints of all ages shall in harmony meet,
Their Saviour, their brethren transported to greet.ö

Jesus says, "Many shall come." They shall come from all dispensations, from all climes, all ages, all countries; from the East, West, North and South, and shall sit down in the kingdom of heaven -- sit down as the warrior when the battle is won; as the laborer when the toil is over; or as the pilgrim when the journey is ended.

How we shall come to know the distinguished worthies in that most glorious of all assemblages, whether by intuition or by angelic presentation, is of but little moment, only so that we know them. But know them we shall, and their deeds of moral heroism, and their fidelity to Christ and his cause shall also be made known, and that they "came up out of great tribulation and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

A converted Indian once said to a visiting missionary as he was about to leave the mission: "Turn around, thou man of God, that I may see your face once more, so that I shall know you in heaven." That poor red man little thought how many myriads of acquaintances he should make among the glorified in heaven whom he never knew on earth.

Oh, think for a moment, my brethren, who will be the guests at that banquet, each contributing his portion to its holy and glorious social delights; who shall undertake to estimate the pleasure and profit of conversing freely with him who was the first to enter heaven; with him who, in the midst of antediluvian giants, walked with God; with him who passed out of the ark on Mount Ararat, built the first altar in the solitude of a depopulated world, and gazed on its first bow of promise; with him who built an altar on Mount Moriah, and with him who was laid an offering thereon; with him who put off his shoes before the burning bush, and for forty days and forty nights on Mount Sinai conversed familiarly with God in the thick cloud that was on the mount! Oh, what will be the luxury of listening to the Sweet Singer of Israel as he strikes his heavenly lyre, and engaging in conversation with all the holy men of old who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; hang on the lips of the first ambassadors of Christ narrating their conflicts, their trials and their success, as they went everywhere, in the midst of trials and death, preaching Jesus and the resurrection!

But the distinguished guests in that assembly are not limited to scripture characters. Around that board are gathered the Christian fathers, and there also sit the noble band of martyrs and confessors, the great reformers, whose achievements under God have been great for the establishment of Christ's kingdom and the elevation of our race. And who of us will not esteem that banquet the more desirable since there we may sit down with such men as Wesley and Whitfield and Chalmers, with Asbury, McKendree and Emory, with George, Fisk, Hedding and Olin, and an innumerable host of distinguished men of God, who in our own day have gone up from the church militant to the church triumphant.

To gain a seat at that banquet, God grant that we may never esteem any sacrifices too great.

"Oh, what are all our sufferings here,
If, Lord, thou count us meet
With that enraptured host to appear,
And worship at thy feet!"

God, bring us together there for Jesus sake. Amen.

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ENDNOTES

1 [I am unable to find detailed information about Henry Wheeler. He was born in 1835 and died in 1925. He is the author of other works than Rays of Light, which appeared in 1883. They are:

One Thousand Questions and Answers Concerning the Methodist Episcopal Church.
New York: Eaton & Mains, 1898.

History and Exposition of the Twenty Five Articles of Religion of the Methodist
Episcopal Church. New York: Eaton & Mains, 1908.

The Apostles Creed: Its History and Contents. Cincinnati: Jennings & Graham, 1912. --
J. Prescott Johnson].

2 Hikock, ôHumanity Immortal,ö p. 309.

3 Isaac Watts, as quoted by Taylor Lewis.

4 ClevelandÆs Cla. Lit., p. 121.

5 Ibid., p. 189.

6 Ibid., p. 391.

7 Bishop Foster, Chatauqua Lectures.

8 Lange, Gen., p. 78.

9 McClintock and Strong, in loco.

10 ClevelandÆs Clas. Lit., p. 391.

11 ôBeyond the Grave,ö p.17.

12 Ibid.

13 Harbaugh, p. 33.

14 PopeÆs Essay, p. 8.

15 ôPreacherÆs Lantern,ö p. 249.

16 See Preface.

[Reuben Nelson was born at Andes, New York, December 13, 1888 and died at his home
in New York February 20, 1879.

At the age of 15 he lost an arm in a mill accident. That year he joined the Methodist
Episcopal Church, and from that time on he devoted his life to the interests of the church. Two
years later he was licensed as exhorter and began holding prayer meetings and giving
exhortations. The following year he was licensed to preach the Gospel. He became a circuit

rider. During this time he advanced his education, making amends for his want of early formal education.

At the age of 26 he became the first president of Wyoming Seminary, in Kingston, Pennsylvania, which was established in 1844. It was one of the first co-educational institutions of learning in the Methodist Episcopal Church. Wishing to return to preaching, he resigned the presidency in 1862. A year later he was asked to resume the presidency and continued to serve the seminary in that capacity until 1872. Throughout difficult times, including the years of the Civil War, the school grew and prospered under his able administration.

Those who write of him concur in the judgment that he was a powerful and eloquent preacher.

In 1872 he was elected book agent of the Methodist Episcopal Church. -- J. Prescott Johnson].

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THE END