
OUR CHILDREN IN HEAVEN



BY JAMES MAPLE, D.D. & JIM ERSKINE

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OUR CHILDREN IN HEAVEN

BY

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"In my Father's house are many mansions."

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PREFACE

CHILDREN are as a ray of sunshine in our homes, bringing joy and gladness. They come as angels of innocence and beauty, awakening new thoughts, kindling holier feelings, leading us to a higher and better life. A home without children, to me, is like heaven without angels; but our dear ones are not safe from the hand of disease and death. Truly the poet sings:

*...there is no flock, however watched and tended
But one dead lamb is there.
There is no fireside, howsoever defended,
But has one vacant chair!*

What a difference the death of a child makes in our hearts and homes. How it changes the tone of our thoughts and takes the warmth and beauty out of life.

*How the little children love us, and no traces
Linger of that smiling angel band.
Gone, forever gone, and in their places
Weary men and anxious women stand.*

The sermons embraced in this little book were written and preached at different and distant periods in a ministry of forty-five years, to comfort sorrowing parents who were mourning the loss of their dear little ones by the hand of death. They are now given to the public with the hope that they may be a comfort to many bleeding hearts.

*Go, little book! from this my solitude;
I cast thee on the waters—go thy ways;
And if, as I believe, thy view is good,
The world will find thee after many days.
Be it with thee according to thy worth;
Go, little book! in faith I send thee forth.*

JAMES MAPLE
Milford, N. J., January 25, 1890

DISCOURSE I.

THE DEATH OF CHILDREN

*If life could be always alluring and bright
As it seems in its innocent morning,
No shade on its prospect—sweet visions at night
The calm of its slumbers adorning—
Too fondly and closely our spirits would trust
In the pleasures which earth seemed to give them,
And slowly and faintly would rise from the dust
As if it were sorrow to leave them.
'Tis well that some shadows flit our way,
Some clouds hover darkly above it;
They teach us while earth is a scene of decay,
It were folly too deeply to love it;
Its joys and its hopes, for a moment which gleam,
Soon fade like a vision at even,
While our spirits turn gladly from earth's passing dream
To the glorious sunlight of heaven."*

*"The son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick;
and his sickness was so sore that there was no breath left in him." (I. Kings 17: 17.)*

"A little child shall lead them." (Isaiah 11 : 6.)

THE other day I met an old friend who informed me of the death of two beautiful little children. There was nothing uncommon in this information, for children are dying everywhere, but it awakened serious thoughts and feelings in my mind.

It carried me back, in imagination, through the stirring scenes of many years, to the solemn hour when the angel of death came to my own home, and took a loved child in his arms and carried him away to the home of angels. The departing wing of that angel cast a long shadow upon my home that rests there still, and it ever will, until it is swept away by the unfolding light of eternity.

All who hear of the death of a child are moved with sympathy, but to those who have children this announcement rings out like a bell, and hundreds will pause and think: "What if it had been my child?" But it awakens thoughts and feelings in the minds of those who have lost children, which those who have never gone through this trial, are totally unable to understand; for it lies beyond the boundaries of their experience. I once thought that I knew something of what it means to lose children, and felt that I could sympathize with parents in this hour of sorrow, for I had been with many in the closing scene of the child's life, and had preached the funeral of scores of children. But when the Savior sent his angels and took one from my own little flock, I found that I had known but little about such an experience as this. It is one of those things that we may think, read and talk about, but can never understand except

through experience.

I have long been much interested in the different manner in which parents meet the sorrows growing out of the death of children. I have seen some who could meet this trial with a calm, serene mind, and a faith in the Savior that lifted them above the storm. They loved their children with a love strong as life itself, but heaven was so near, so much of a reality to them, that the entrance of a dear child into it only served to lift them up nearer to it, and they went on in life rejoicing in the Savior's love. This is a rare experience, and it is a gift. Sometimes parents who can not meet this trial in this manner mourn over it, and feel that it is because they have not as much of the spirit of Christ as they ought to have; but this is a mistake.

All parents can not meet such trials in the same way, or with the same calmness of mind, for we are differently constituted, and should not grieve over what we can not help. It is not possible for us all to feel alike, and we should not blame ourselves because we can not meet the trials of life with the same serenity of mind that others can. This difference grows out of the diversity in our natures, and we can no more help it than we can control the wind. Our heavenly Father understands this, and deals with us accordingly.

It is difficult for us to realize that children must die. We know that they are mortal, but still we can not make it a reality to ourselves; and when the angel of death comes, we say: "I did not think that my child could die, and now he is gone." The very soul is crushed into the dust, and we can not be comforted. The prophet understood the workings of the human soul when in describing the sorrow of the mothers whose children were murdered by Herod, he said "In Ramah, was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not." The flood-gates were down, and they could not be comforted. In this state of mind the mother should be let alone. Let grief have its own way. This is best, and such was the example of Christ.

His dear friend Lazarus was dead, and the lonely sisters were overwhelmed with unutterable sorrow. When the Savior came their cry was: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, our brother had not died." What did he do? He answered them not a word, save only, "Thy brother shall live again." Grief has its own right, and a sacred right it is. We should not intrude our common place words of comfort upon the heart-stricken as we sometimes do. Silence is often the best comforter.

I once saw a broken-hearted mother weeping beside the couch of her dying child. I could not say a word. My heart was too full, for I knew what that meant. While sitting there in silence a young mother, who had but recently lost a child, came in. She spoke not a word. A single glance of her eye took in the whole situation, and she went up to the mother, knelt beside her, put her arm around her neck, and wept with her. There was consolation in that act, and the two mourning hearts blended into one.

When the angel of death comes the first time to a home and takes away a dear child, the thoughts almost invariably turn to inquire how the sad misfortune might have been prevented. They feel as the sisters did: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." They imagine if they had only taken a little better care; had kept him at home out of the cold; or had only sent for a different doctor, he had not died.

This reveals a peculiarity of the mind that we have all experienced to some extent. When we sin and are awakened to a consciousness of it, the mind immediately goes to work to invent means to torture

itself under the feeling that we ought to suffer is a kind of atonement for it. The mind hunts up causes to increase its anguish to the extent of suffering. Thus it is in sorrow.

But the truth is right here: you used all the knowledge you had, and did the best you could under the circumstances; you may see now where you might have done better, but this light you have gained by experience. If you made a mistake you did all you knew, and that was all you could do. You could not wait to learn by experience. You must act then, and all that you could possibly do was to follow the light you had. You should not blame yourself for what you could not help.

There is a great difference between people in regard to the tenacity of feeling. Some feel deeper and longer than others. There are some parents who never get over their grief. The wound in their heart may heal over, but it is always sore to the touch. There is a difference in the vibrating power of musical instruments when the chords are struck. This is a peculiarity of their nature. Thus it is with the human heart: there is a difference in the vibration when the chords are struck. Some vibrate longer than others, but I do not know that those who suffer the longest are the unhappiest.

We should not cultivate our grief. We should learn and practice the lessons it is designed to teach; but as far as it is possible we should "forget the things which are behind, and reach forth unto those things which are before." Turn away your thoughts from the lonely grave, and look up to the bright land beyond where our dear departed are angels of light. Cultivate cheerful thoughts; remember that the discipline of life is to lit us better for our work here, and for the enjoyment of heaven.

The death of a dear child tends to soften the rugged nature of the sternest of men, and it quickens their sympathies and love for all children. It makes all children sacred to them, and every child comes in for a share of their sympathy. They are more tender, gentle, and sweet spirited than ever before. I have seen great, strong, rugged men who were so completely absorbed in the pursuit of the objects of earthly ambition that they cared not for children and hardly noticed them, but when a little one in their own home spread his wings and soared away to happier climes above, it led them out of their selfishness, and they grew wondrously tender and loving towards children. A little child led them into a purer and sweeter life.

Speak to them of the dear departed, and they will stop amid the hurry of business, sit down, talk and cry for an hour with you about the loved child. The soft hand of an unseen little one leads them, and their rugged natures are spiritualized. We never love our children, nor the children of others, so well as when the shadow of the grave of a dear child falls across our path in life.

Our children are never so much with us as after they have left and gone to heaven. Those are not the nearest to, and influence us the most, who are personally present. The child who left our home and spread its wings for heaven, years ago may be, and often is, nearer to us, and more with us than those with whom we are transacting business every day. They come back to us; you remember their look, the sweet smile, the tender winning ways of the loved one. Often in the busiest moments of life you see them by your side as you did years ago.

The house is full of the child's spirit, and their presence is everywhere. When you see his cap hanging in the wardrobe it will wake up more thoughts than all the books in your library. One of the most beautiful expressions of this fact in the English language is the poem of Pierpont who, in speaking of his child, who had gone home to the better land, said:

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

*I walk my parlor floor,
And through the open door
I hear a foot-fall on the chamber stair;
I'm stepping towards the hall
To give the boy a call;
And then bethink me that — he is not there.*

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

*I cannot make him dead,
When passing by the bed,
So long watched over with parental care;
My spirit and my eye
Seek it inquiringly,
Before the thought comes that—he is not there.*

*When, at the cool, gray break
Of day, from sleep I wake,
With my first breathing of the morning air
My soul goes up with joy
To Him who gave my boy;
Then comes the sad thought that—he is not there.*

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

Thus our children, who are gone, are still with us, and lead us to better thoughts and a purer life. It is often the case that strong, rugged men, immersed in the business of the world, and blind to their spiritual and eternal interests, are awakened to a consciousness of their real situation, and led to Christ by the death of a dear child. The image of the loved one follows them like an angel of mercy, wooing them away from all that is evil, and lifting their thoughts to God and heaven. It is literally true that a little child leads them, and there are thousands rejoicing in heaven who were drawn there by the sweet and saving influence of a dear child who went before them. The memory of a departed child is the guiding power in the minds of thousands of parents.

Well does the poet sing:

*Once on a summer day divine,
Two little hands fell into mine;
How pink they were! how frail and fine!
Each one a crumpled velvet ball,
So soft and so absurdly small,
Ah, me! to hold within them all
Life's tangled and mysterious skein,
The mingled threads of joy and pain,
Whose hidden ends we seek in vain.*

*Oh, fast the years have fled away;
Two little hands at work or play,
Still bide with me the livelong day;
Now on some willful mischief bent;
Now folded—sleepy and content.
The dimpled fingers curled, like those
Sweet, jealous leaves that cling and close
About the red heart of a rose.*

*I kissed them with a passionate sigh;
The quick tears spring, I scarce know why,
In thinking of the by-and-by;
How will they build, these little hands?
Upon the treacherous, shifting sands?
Or where the rock, eternal, stands?
And will they fashion, strong and true,
The work that they shall find to do?
Dear little hands, if I but knew!*

*Could I but see the veiled Fate,
Behind yon barred and hidden gate!
Yet, trusting this, my love must wait!
Oh, when perplexed no more by those
Tear-blinded ways, my wanderings cease
In the sweet valleys of his peace;
Beyond the dark, some heavenly sign,
Some clue, however faint and fine,
Shall guide these little hands to mine.*

How sweet the memory of the child now residing in heaven. How pure and elevating the thoughts and desires they awaken in the mind and heart. It lifts us out of our sensual nature, and makes us long to be purer and better. There is nothing that makes us realize heaven like the death of a child. There is something in the nature of a child congenial with heaven, "of such is the kingdom of heaven." We follow the child in thought into the spirit world, and a thousand questions come up in the mind concerning them: What kind of a body has she there? How does she live? Who takes care of her? Who instructs her? Does she remember and love her parents still? Do the holy angels look after her?

Not once, but many times a day, do parents thus in thought explore the heavenly land, and they never forget it when they have once followed the child there. In this way heaven becomes a reality to us, and

we are brought under its influence. When one or more of our children emigrate to heaven it fixes our thoughts there, and our whole family seems to group before the mind in that happy clime. This makes our life deeper and more sacred than when we had all our children with us. It lifts us up to a higher plane of thought, feeling and life. It is thus that a little child leads us.

The mother in our text, whose child died, was waked up to a consciousness of God's existence and claims by this event. Then she said unto Elijah, " What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God ? Art thou come unto me to call my sins to remembrance, and to slay my son?" Thus sorrow has its recompense.

*I stood by a rose tree bending low
With lovely blossoms white as snow,
And I sighed as I looked on its perfect bloom
And drank in its beauty and rich perfume,
For I said : It is fair and it can not stay;
It will pass away—it will pass away.*

*I looked on a dull November sky,
And I heard the bleak wind moan and cry;
Never a blossom grew at my feet,
And the birds had flown, and the sad rain beat
But I said : Though the hour is dull and gray,
It will pass away—it will pass away.*

*I saw a young face, fair with youth,
Bright with promise, and sweet with truth;
'Twas the morn of life, and the sun was up,
Spilling its light like an o'erfilled cup;
Smile on, I said, while lingers May:
It will pass away—it will pass away.*

*I looked on a heart bowed down with woe.
Bent with sorrow like boughs with snow;
And I said: There is never so great a grief
But yet found comfort and sweet relief;
The snow will melt in the sun some day—
It will pass away—it will pass away.*

*The one great Ruler of all expense,
Gives us this law of recompense:
That ever must Pleasure pay tax to Pain,
And Pain restore to Hope again:
And nothing is lost, however, we say—
It has passed away—it has passed away.*

The child taken away by death always remains a child in the memory of the parent. Other children grow old, this continues a youth. She looks as we last saw her in health. In imagination the parent hears her sweet voice and light step; sees her golden curls and clear bright eyes, all just as they were in life. Years may pass, the child remains in the memory, as at first, a bright happy child. Her lovely form moves about us: and what is such a memory but an angel presence? Next to seeing an angel, is seeing

with a parent's love such a cherished form. Such a presence softens the rugged nature of man, subdues his turbulent passions, spiritualizes his thoughts, and makes him a better father and citizen. It is the realization of the old Hebrew idea, that every man is followed by guardian angel.

John Quincy Adams, in an address to a mother who mourned the loss of her little children, said:

*O'er thee, with looks of love they bend;
For thee the Lord of life implore;
And oft from sainted bliss descend,
Thy wounded spirit to restore.
Oft, in the stillness of night,
They smooth the pillow of thy bed;
Oft till the morn's returning light,
Still watchful, hover o'er thy head.*

*Hark! In such strains as saints employ,
They whisper to thy bosom, peace;
Calm the perturbed heart to joy,
And bid the streaming cease.
They dry, henceforth, the bitter tear;
Their part and thine inverted see;
Thou wert their guardian angel here,
Thy guardian angel now to thee.*

Such an angel presence has followed me for years, and it has been a sacred presence. To this presence I am largely indebted for all that I am, and all that I hope to be. Years ago a loved child left my home for heaven, and I expect to meet him again in the better home.

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

*Yes, we all live to God!
Father, thy chastening rod
So help us, thine afflicted ones, to bear
That, in the spirit land,
Meeting at thy right hand,
'Twill be our heaven to find that—he is there.*

The idea that we shall meet and know our friends in heaven is a blessed hope, and it enabled the poet to sing:

*When for me the silent oar
Parts the silent river,
And I stand upon the shore
Of the strange Forever,*

*Shall I miss the loved and known?
Shall I vainly seek mine own?*

*Amid the crowd that comes to meet
Spirits sin forgiven—
Listening to their echoing feet
Down the streets of heaven—
Shall I know the footsteps near
That I listen, wait for, here?*

*Then will one approach the brink
With a hand extended,
One whose thoughts I loved to think
Ere the veil was rended,
Saying, 'Welcome! we have died,
And again are side by side.'*

*Can the bonds that make us here
Know ourselves immortal,
Drop away, like foliage sear,
At life's inner portal?
What is holiest here below
Must forever live and glow.*

*I shall love the angels well,
After I have found them
In the mansions where they dwell
With the glory round them;
But at first, without surprise,
Let me look into human eyes.*

*Step by step our feet must go
Up the holy mountain;
Drop by drop within us flow
Life's unfailing fountain;
Angels sing with crowns that burn;
We shall have a song to learn.*

*He who on our earthly path
Bids us help each other—
Who his well-beloved hath
Made our elder brother—
Will but clasp the chain of love
Closer when he meets above.*

*Therefore dread I not to go
O'er the Silent River,
Death, thy hastening oar I know
Bear me, thou life giver,
Through the waters to the shore,
Where mine own hath gone before.*

DISCOURSE II.

HOPE IN SORROW

*In the Scottish hills as a shepherd strolled
In the eve with his ancient crook,
He found a lamb, that was young and chilled,
By the side of a purling brook.*

*And fearing the lamb might sicken and die,
Or, from his mother's side might roam,
He carried it with a tender care
To a fold in his highland home.*

*Mid the dreary night—o'er the craggy peaks—
Through the winds, and the storms, and cold,
The mother followed her captured lamb
To the door of the shepherd's fold.*

*One; we had a lamb by its mother's side—
It was artless and pure, and mild—
The dearest lamb in our dear flock,
Was the pale, little blue-eyed child.*

*But a shepherd came, when the sun grew low,
By a path that has long been trod,
And carried our lamb through the mists of night.
To his fold in the mount of God.*

*With tearful eye and a bleeding heart,
We must bear it and struggle on;
Must climb the mount by the shepherd's track,
To the fold where our lamb is gone.*

"I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." II. SAMUEL 12: 28.

DAVID'S child "was very sick." He knew that this sickness was of divine appointment; therefore he went to God in earnest prayer "for the child." He "fasted, and went in and lay all night upon the earth." He refused to eat, but continued in prayer for seven days and nights.

"It came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead; for, they said, behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, but he would not hearken unto our voice; how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead?"

But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead; therefore, David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead. Then David arose from the earth, and washed and annointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshiped: then he came into his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat."

His servants were astonished at this, and said unto him: "What thing is this that thou hast done? Thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise up and eat bread." He answered: "While the child was yet alive, I fasted, and wept: for I said, "Who can tell whether the LORD will be gracious to me, that the child may live? 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."

This was the only rational and Christian view of the matter. While the child was alive he could not tell what the divine purpose was; therefore he prayed for God to spare the child's life. But when the child died he knew the divine will, and bowed in humble submission to it.

From this language of David we learn that he believed that his child still existed; that although he had passed away from this earth, he lived in the conscious enjoyment of all his powers in another state of being, and that he should meet him again. He knew that the child could not come back to him, but he expected to go to it.—"I shall go to him."—It is only the body of the child that dies—the spirit still lives. This is the glorious doctrine of Christianity confirmed by reason. The powers of the child point to its immortality. There is something in the infant which fire can not burn, nor waters drown, nor death assail; each one has an individuality, an identity, a personality, which is unsusceptible of decay, impregnable to corruption, without possibility of perishing. In the calm composure of faith and hope the mother can say of her child, in the language of the poet—

*I see thee still:
Thou art not in the grave confined—
Death can not chain the immortal mind;
Let earth close o'er its sacred trust,
But goodness dies not in the dust,
Thus, my child! 'tis not thee
Beneath the coffin lid I see;
Thou to a fairer land art gone;
There, let me hope, my journey done,
To see thee still.*

The existence of the eyes and lungs imply the existence of air and light. For God to have created the lungs and eyes without the corresponding elements of light and air, would have been infinite folly. If a being not belonging to our race should find an infant child with those wonderful engines, the eyes and the lungs, he would naturally infer that there were some elements adapted to them. A reasonable degree of intelligence would force him to this conclusion.

There is a general instinct, or expectation of immortality in the human soul. There is an earnest longing for it. Reasoning from analogy, is it not reasonable to suppose that God has made arrangements to meet this want of our nature? If not, he has committed as great a blunder as though he had created man with lungs and eyes, without the corresponding elements of air and light.

*Whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
This longing after immortality?
'Tis the divinity that stirs within us;
'Tis reason itself that points out an hereafter,
And intimates immortality to man.*

In the seed of the flower we have a beautiful illustration of the order of Providence. In it there is a specific principle of life, and when subjected to the requisite conditions of moisture, warmth, and air, this life begins the work of organization. The roots and stalk begin to grow, and draw their nourishment from the seed, and then they press against the shell of the seed to get out. The radical is ready to penetrate into the earth in the form of roots, and the plumule to ascend into the air in the form of a stalk or trunk. Every seed of all the innumerable number of seeds that ever existed, is capable of this development; but suppose that right at this period in the history of their development, when ready to burst forth into new flowers, grain, and trees, they are all annihilated; that the roots never descend into the ground, nor the stalk into the air; that they were created by God just for this purpose. What should we think of the contriver of such an order of nature if he were the destroyer also? Would it not evince a want of wisdom? Thus the creation of a child and the endowing it with the marvelous power of endless development, evinces its immortality or impeaches the wisdom of God.

Take the egg of the bird as an illustration of this proposition. After a few days incubation, a little spot where the heart begins to beat is seen. From this vital center, tissues begin to radiate in all directions. Then the bones begin to appear. A ganglion of mucus, indicating the future brain. The wonderful system of blood vessels is formed. The eyes and ears appear. The legs and wings spring out, supported by a complement of bones, and strung with the requisite muscles, and made sensitive with thousands of nerves. When we contemplate all this wonderful arrangement of vitalized machinery, what does it indicate? The powers of that embryo bird prove that the narrow house in which it is now confined is not its home; that it was made for a higher life; that those wings were made for the air, those eyes to drink in the glad sunlight of day; that harp-like throat, instinct with song, shall make the groves vocal with music. Its powers are prophetic of a higher and nobler life than to perish in the shell. Thus the child's powers are prophetic of an immortal life, and if it is not to live forever then its very existence is a contradiction of every idea of a God; for he has so constituted it as to excite hopes, and if these are to end in the darkness of eternal night, it robs God of the attributes of wisdom and goodness; for would a wise and benevolent being create creatures, not only capable of endless progression, but also possessing an unconquerable desire for immortality, only to have these desires blasted? This would be cruel in the extreme.

The objector meets us here with the objection that plants and flowers spring up, grow, and then perish; and may it not be so with the child? I can understand why God should strew the bottom of the Atlantic and Pacific ocean with beautiful pearls and many colored shells, and permit them to radiate all their beauty away in the gloom of the unfathomable deep; why he should cover the earth with myriads of flowers, and then suffer them to fade and die; why he should span the bosom of the storm-cloud with the blended beauties of the rainbow, and in an hour melt it into air; why he should shoot up the auroras

and light up the northern skies in a blaze of glory, and then quench the glittering flowers; why he should adorn the opening morning with splendors to be swallowed up in the brightening day; why he should paint the glowing sunset in such gorgeous colors, to be lost in the darkness of the night; why he should clothe the earth in the vernal loveliness of spring, the luxuriance of summer, and the golden-tinted leaves of autumn, to be followed by the dreary reign of winter—I say that I can understand all this, for these forms of beauty and glory have no conscious existence; they did not know that they lived. They had no hope, and when they died no expectations perished—had no knowledge that they died, Not so with the child. There is conscious existence, and glowing hope of the future. This makes a wide difference between the child and the plant, and indicates the immortality of the soul.

I cannot understand why a being just awakened into conscious existence, capable of such vast, and to us, incomprehensible improvement, and of such keep and unending gratification, of yielding such subjective enjoyment, and longing for immortality — I cannot understand why such a soul should die like vernal flowers, by some inherent law of limitation, and all its vast powers be dissipated like the morning dew. I cannot understand why a soul ready to enter upon the sublime realms of splendor and beatitude, and of winging the celestial course upward, through countless cycles of time and endless spirals of ascension, should be struck into annihilation, changed into vacuum, reduced to an idealess state. Such a thought robs God of all the glory of the attributes of wisdom and benevolence. How pertinent the poet's question :

*Shall spring the faded world renew ?
Shall waning moons their light renew?
Again shall setting suns ascend
And chase the darkness from our view*

But—

*In those lone, silent realms of night,
Shall peace and hope no more arise?
No future morning shed its light?
No daystar gild the darksome night?*

Thank God! there is hope! Everything within and without the child points to a glorious future. Its immortality is written upon its soul by the finger of God, and engraved upon all nature.

*O! listen, man!
A voice within us speaks the startling words,
'Man, thou shalt not die!' celestial voices
Hymn it round our souls; according harps,
By angel fingers touched, when the mild stars
Of morning stars together, sound forth still
The song of our great immortality;
Thick clustering orbs, and this our fair domain;
The tall, dark mountains, and deep-toned seas,
O! listen ye! our spirits; drink it in
From all the air. 'Tis in the gentle moonlight;
'Tis floating in days setting glorious; night,
Wrapped in the silent robe, with silent step
Comes to our bed, and breathes it into our ears;*

*Night and dawn, bright day and thoughtful eve,
All time, all bounds, the limitless expanse,
As one vast, mystic instrument are touched
By an unseen, living hand and conscious chords
Given with joy in this great jubilee,
The dying hear it, and, as sounds of earth
Grow dull and distant, wake their passing souls
To mingle in this heavenly harmony.*

When our child dies we have the blessed assurance that it is only the body that perishes; that the spirit lives in conscious existence, and will continue to live as long as eternity endures. Death, to the child, is only a new birth into a higher state of being. Of the dear departed the poet sings beautifully:

*There is no death; what seems so is transition,
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life elysian,
Whose portals we call death.*

*She is not dead—the child of our affection,
But gone unto that school
Where she no longer needs our poor protection,
And Christ himself doth rule.*

Occasionally, during the summer, we find hanging to the twigs of our fruit trees, the shell of a beautiful creature of God. Once it contained a living insect. There is now the outward covering, but the living inhabitant is gone. When we see these dead bodies, we know that beautiful imperial butterflies were born from them; with powers that enable them to, float at will on the gentle zephyrs of summer, from flower to flower. Thus we weep over the lifeless body of our child, and say an infant is dead, the angels see that a new immortal is born into heaven:

*The unextinguishable beam,
With dust united at our birth,
Sheds a more dim, discolored gleam
The more it lingers upon earth.
Closed in this dark body of clay,
The stream of glory faintly burns,
Not unobserved, the lucid ray
To its own native fount returns.*

*But when the Lord of mortal breath
Decrees his bounty to resume,
And points the silent shaft of death
Which speeds an infant to the tomb.
No passion fierce, no low desire,
Has quenched the radiance of the flame;
Back to its God the living fire
Reverts, unclouded as it came,*

*Fond mourners, be that solace thine;
Let hope her healing charm impart,
And soothe, with melodies divine,
The anguish of a mother's heart.
Oh, think the darlings of thy love,
Divested of this earthly clod,
Amid the unnumbered saints above,
Bask in the bosom of their God.*

In many families there is an empty chair. From nearly every extended family circle one or more little children have faded away.

*'There is no flock, however watched and tended,
But one dead lamb is there;
There is no fireside, howso'er defended,
But has one vacant chair.

The air is full of farewells to the dying,
And mournings for the dead;
The heart of Rachel, for her children crying,
Will not be comforted.*

In many homes is a hushed voice of gladness, there is a veiled face, whose parting leaves a dark silent place by the once joyous hearth. A smile hath passed, which filled its home with light. A soul hath gone, whose beauty made that smile so bright. The sorrowing heart asks, where is that soul? To what land has it flown? What are its surroundings, and means of improvement and enjoyment? The parent's heart is not satisfied with the simple assurance that the child still lives. We long to know something more than this. The poet has given a true expression of this feeling in the following lines:

*The nursery shows thy pictured wall,—
Thy bat, thy bow,
Thy cloak and bonnet, club and ball;
But where art thou?*

The weeping Mary, at the tomb of her Savior, asked: "Tell me where thou hast laid him?" Sorrow asks for something definite. "What are the teachings of reason and revelation on this deeply interesting subject? After the assurance that the child lives, one of the first questions that arises in the parent's heart is, where is it? The scriptures give us the assurance that it is in heaven with the loving, tender Savior. He teaches us that of such is the kingdom of heaven. This being true, it is reasonable to infer that when it passes away it ascends to heaven. It is pleasing to know that they are in heaven; for there is concentrated all that is grand in physical nature, sublime in intellect, and beautiful in morals.

The parent can sing—

*Thou art happy now at last,
This painful life o'erpast;
Thou art happy now at last
On heaven's happy shore,
Amid the shining bands*

*Of angels thou dost stand,
And lift thy little hands
Evermore.
In the land of the dear departed,
Afar, in the silent land.*

Yet another question of deep interest to the parent in the loss of a child is, are there congenial spirits to meet it when it enters the spirit land, or is it left to wander above through the vast wilds of infinite space? The poet has beautifully expressed this feeling:

*Into the silent land,
Thither! O, thither!
Didst thou go forth with none to comfort thee?
Didst thou no light in that dark country see?
No friend to take thee by the little hand,
To lead thee gently to the land
Of the dear departed?
Into the silent land.*

We have reason to believe that angels come forth to meet the child when it passes out of this life, and that they conduct it to its home amid the floral scenes of heaven. We know that the celestial messengers are employed to guide the soul of the adult Christian to the paradise of God. The spirit of the beggar "was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom." Is it not reasonable to suppose that they are also sent to conduct the infant spirit to the Savior's bosom in heaven? May we not join with the poet and sing—

*Hark I how the angels as they fly,
Sing through the regions of the sky,
Bearing an infant in their arms,
Securely freed from sin's alarms.*

*Welcome, dear babe, to Jesus' breast,
Forever there in joy to rest.
Welcome in Jesus' courts above,
To sing thy great Redeemer's love.*

*We left the heavens and flew to earth,
To watch thee at thy mortal birth;
Obedient to thy Savior's will,
We stand to love and guard thee still.*

*When the resistless call of Death
Bade thee resign thy infant breath,
When parents wept and thou didst smile,
We were thy guardians all the while.*

*Now with lightning speed we bear
The child committed to our care ;
With anthems, such as angels sing,
We fly to bear thee to our King.*

*Thus sweetly borne he flies to rest,
We know 'tis well—nay more—'tis best,
When we our pilgrim's path have trod,
Oh, may we find him with our God.*

Children in heaven among the angels of God. Members of our own families changed into angels of light. Our children in the school of Christ, what a blessed thought! What a motive to make heaven our home. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." The bride in Christ's church. Part of this church is on earth, and part in heaven. Those who are in heaven say, "Come." Who does the eye of faith see among the shining ranks of the redeemed in heaven? A father is there; a mother; a lovely babe. The bright, beautiful little angel reaches out its hands in earnest entreaty to the parents and says, "Father, mother, come up here, and behold the matchless glory of God and the Lamb. Come, and gaze upon the beautiful scenes of heaven, and listen to the sweet songs of the immortal songsters. Oh, come, and live to die no more." I know the answer of the parent's heart, "I am coming, oh, my child, I am coming." Parents, will you put this noble impulse into practice? Remember the Savior says, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." This conversion is necessary to bring you into harmony with your child in heaven, and within the celestial influence of the divine circle in which it moves.

*As tender mothers, guiding baby steps
When places come at which the tiny feet
Would trip, lift up the little ones in arms
Of love, and set them down beyond the harm.
So did our Father watch the precious boy
Led o'er the stones by me, who stumbled oft
Myself, but strove to help my darling on.
He saw the sweet limbs faltering, and saw
Rough ways before us, where my arms would fail;
So reached from heaven, and lifting the dear child,
Who smiled in leaving me, he put him down
Beyond all hurt, beyond my sight, and bade
Him wait for me! Shall I not then be glad,
And, thanking God, press on to overtake?*

It is objected to the views that I have presented that it is impossible to know anything about a state of being beyond this. It is true we can not know, in the scientific sense of knowing, what, if anything, is beyond the grave. It is true that the vital element, without which all religion fails, is Faith. But there are

some things we know even without revelation. We know that the whole world of force lies outside the realm of the visible. We know that no chemist or physiologist ever yet touched, tasted, smelt, heard or saw the slightest or the greatest of all the world of forces whose manifestations are on every side of us.

We see the flash of the lightning, but the force behind it, never. We watch the springing vegetation, but never have seen the forces within it. We know that the world—the sentient and the material world as well—is sustained and animated by forces not the lightest of which is visible to us. We see the results, the manifestations—the flash produced by one, the rumble by the other, the color by a third—but we never see the force. So that belief in the existence of the invisible is at least necessary to the mind.

We know one other thing. Take a watch and remove the crystal, and the watch continues to work. Remove either lid or both lids, and you have not touched the seat of the watch's activity. But take out one of the little pivots within and the watch is dead. That is an essential part of the watch, indispensable to the realization of the purpose of its maker. To us, history, observation, personal experience, all seem to establish the fact that, deprived of faith in God, a man begins to run down, the world begins to run down, like a watch with a broken spring. We are satisfied that man the individual and man the race, deprived of faith in immortality never can attain his best and fullest development, never can fulfill the purposes of his existence. The watch-spring can be replaced by another; but the world has never found a faith that can take the place of faith in immortality. We do not ask for scientific knowledge on that point; we are content in and with that faith.

DISCOURSE III.

HEAVEN A SCHOOL FOR INFANTS

*They at last are safe from falling
On the battle field of life;
Overcome, as thousands have been,
By temptation, care and strife;
And have died with hands close gathered
In the tender clasp of ours,
God be thanked that we could fold them
Pure as snow, and full of flowers!
" So with love's divinest token,
Yielded to a tender care,
Than the world below could give them,
Or our human weakness bear.
They are safe from pain and sorrow;
Cheerfully we'll bear the rod,
With these blossoms safely nurtured
In the garden of our God.*

*"For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them
and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters." (REV. 7 : 17)*

CHRIST seems to be the agent through whom God accomplishes all his great purposes. It was by "him he made the worlds." He was chosen from eternity to redeem the lost world, and in our text we are taught that he is the agent in promoting the happiness of the redeemed in heaven. "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and so shall lead them unto living fountains of waters." Living fountains means running streams as contrasted with standing water and stagnant pools. These living fountains are designed to illustrate the happiness of heaven, and they represent it as fresh and ever-flowing, like streams in the desert, when weary of the pleasures of earth. Its fountains become stagnant, and they turn away from them sick at heart. Not so with the fountains of happiness that bubble up in the verdant plains of heaven to satiate the thirst of the sons of light. They are always fresh. The happiness of the redeemed in heaven is perennial. The stream that flows from the throne of God will never run dry.

The happiness of heaven will be intellectual and spiritual, and will flow from intellectual and spiritual knowledge, for we will have no animal nature there. "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." Those living fountains, then, represent the sources of intellectual and spiritual knowledge. The Savior will lead the redeemed to those fountains. This represents heaven under the idea of a school, with Christ at it's head. Longfellow sings beautifully and sweetly of his departed daughter—

*She is not dead, child of our affection,
But gone unto that school
Where she no longer needs our poor protection,
And Christ doth rule.*

Children do not cease to learn when they enter the spirit world. Then they pass into another school, where they shall have different teachers from what they have here, and new fountains of knowledge shall be open to them. They will be brought into entirely new relations to God and the universe of mind and matter. This of itself will awaken new thought and lead to new enquiries.

Some suppose that when the infant spirit enters the heavenly world it will acquire a full knowledge of all things by a miracle; that God will, by an exhibition of his infinite power, impart this knowledge at once. This is not reasonable to suppose. It is at war with our nature and God's present method of communicating information to man. Here God imparts knowledge gradually and through the use of means. This idea is also opposed to the law of all life, physical, intellectual and spiritual, for life ever unfolds itself gradually.

God might develop the mind of the child suddenly by miracle here, but he does not see proper to do it, and there is no evidence that he will do it in the heavenly world. There is happiness in acquiring knowledge gradually. That heaven is a school in which infant minds are educated by celestial teachers is obvious from the following considerations:

I.—THE HUMAN MIND APPEARS TO BE CAPABLE OF MAKING CONTINUAL PROGRESS IN INTELLECTUAL
ADVANCEMENT, AND OF ENJOYING HAPPINESS IN EVERY STAGE OF ITS DEVELOPMENT.

In this life we can perceive no limits to the onward march of the mind, but that which arises from its connection with this physical body. Up to the final moment of our connection with this earth, the human mind is capable of acquiring new ideas of God, His attributes, and the works of His hands. If it is thus in this world, what more should it be in the world to come? Is it reasonable to suppose that this mind will cease to grow in knowledge and virtue when it passes from this earth? Will the little child, with but few or no ideas, remain thus forever? Will its intellectual and moral growth cease with this life? As the existence of the eye and the ear implies the existence of corresponding elements of light and sound, so this capacity for almost unlimited growth evince the existence of a field for this growth.

II.—THERE IS NOTHING IN DEATH TO CHANGE THE INTELLECTUAL NATURE OF THE CHILD.

Death has only to do with the body. The soul remains the same in the conscious exercise of all its powers. The future life of the child is the perfection of this—mind, purity, innocence, love and moral beauty are the same there as here. Life in heaven is the outgrowth and perfection of this life. We speak of a body with a soul, but more properly it is a soul with a body; and the death of the child is simply its leaving the mortal body and entering into the home of angels.

This being so the manner of acquiring knowledge in the spirit world must be somewhat analogous to the method of obtaining it here, unless it is imparted by a miracle; and there are no intimations in the scriptures that this will be the case.

The real advancement of the soul can not be secured by furnishing knowledge from an outward source; it must be done by a personal exercise of the faculties of the mind. Mere outward appliances will not make a tree grow. There must be an actual evolution of its own life. It is the operation

of its own activities within that makes it expand. Thus it is with the mind — man grows in knowledge by the exercise of his own powers. This is true of this life, and it must be of the future life, unless there is an entire change of the nature and capacities of the mind; but we have no intimations in the Bible that such a change will occur. Then it is obvious that children will be instructed and grow in knowledge in heaven. There they will be led to living fountains of wisdom and knowledge by their heavenly teachers.

III.— THE BIBLE TEACHES US THAT THE ANGELIC INHABITANTS OF HEAVEN ARE ANXIOUS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE WONDERFUL PLAN OF SALVATION THAN WHAT THEY NOW KNOW.

They are still learners. Speaking of the glorious scheme of salvation spoken of by the prophets, Peter said: " Which things the angels desire to look into." (I. Peter 1: 12.) If this is true of the angels who have always lived at the fountain-head of all knowledge, how much more of the redeemed from earth. The sacred writers use the most beautiful objects in nature to illustrate the sublime grandeur of the paradise of God. The reality doubtless is more lovely than the symbols, and it is reasonable to suppose that God would adorn the capitol of his kingdom with the grandest exhibitions of his creative wisdom, power and love. Then how beautiful and sublime the scenery of heaven must be.

The soul when ushered, through the gate of death, into the midst of this lovely scenery will awaken into new and higher intellectual and spiritual life. An infinite variety of new objects will present themselves to the mind, and a thousand inquiries will be awakened. This must of necessity be the case, for we are so constituted that whenever we are introduced into new scenes and relations to the universe of mind and matter that we immediately begin to investigate. We want to know all about them. This peculiarity of our mental organism is early developed in the child. As soon as he or she begins to think they commence to investigate and inquire into the cause and nature of every object of sense, and will ask a thousand questions that the wisest man can not answer. Under the clear light and quickening influence of heaven's sublime scenes, this will be awakened into more intense activity. Will not this inquiring spirit be gratified? The very fact that God has implanted it in our mental nature proves that he has made provisions to meet it; for infinite wisdom, power and goodness is never at a fault. It is obvious, from this consideration, that heaven is a school where the mind's education — commenced here—is to be carried on and perfected.

The scenery of heaven will tend to unfold the mind of the child. The presence of a friend causes our heart to open sweetly toward him. Thus it will be with the objects of knowledge in heaven. The warm rays of the sun combine with the life of the bud to expand it; so the faculties of the mind will be moved to grow and flourish by the sons of heaven.

IV.—MANY CHILDREN PASS INTO HEAVEN TOO LIMITED IN KNOWLEDGE TO UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE THE NATURE AND GRANDEUR OF GOD'S WORKS.

A knowledge of the sciences is essential to a correct understanding of the wonderful works of God, and without this knowledge no progress can be made in the study of the material universe, and in forming a just conception of the number and variety of the inhabitants of God's great empire. Without these sciences we would know nothing of the form, magnitude, and distances of the heavenly bodies; of their beautiful and complicated motion and relations; of the wonderful properties of air, light and

matter. In a word, we would know but little or nothing of the sublime wonders of God's marvelous works by which we are surrounded on every hand. Are those infants, who enter heaven without this knowledge, to remain forever in ignorance? Is this reasonable to suppose?

Certainly not! They may not acquire this knowledge in the same way that we do. They may not have to go through the same slow and laborious process, but they must have an acquaintance with these sciences to understand and appreciate the works of God. Infants pass into heaven without this knowledge. They must acquire it there or remain forever ignorant of the vast universe and its sublime developments of God's wisdom, power, and love. Is it reasonable to suppose that infinite love and wisdom will leave them forever in this state of ignorance, and thus cut off from such a rich source of happiness? We must suppose this, or that heaven is a school.

There may be latent powers of mind and methods of imparting knowledge in heaven unknown to us here. Who can describe the various ways by which the mind is developed even in this state of being, and how great the improvements that have been made in the methods of education in the progress of the ages. The means of imparting knowledge to infant minds in heaven will be in harmony with their advanced state.

Millions of infants enter heaven too young to know anything about the Savior and the glorious plan of salvation revealed through him. It is not to be supposed that they are to be left in this state of ignorance forever. It is not possible for infinite goodness and wisdom to leave them in profound ignorance of the wonderful story of the cross, and thus cut them off from all knowledge of the grandest development of his character ever made to the universe. This can not be. They will be instructed in the history of redemption there. The Savior himself "shall feed them, and shall lead them to living fountains of waters." There are some children who live long enough to learn to know and love the Savior, and have passed from earth to his arms in heaven.

*There came a little child, with sunny hair,
All fearless to the brink of death's dark river,
And with a sweet confiding in the care
Of him who is of life the joy and giver;
And as upon the waves she left our sight,
We heard her say, ' My Savior makes them bright.'*

Two beautiful little children were very ill in the same room. The older of the two was heard frequently attempting to teach the younger to pronounce the word "hallelujah!" but without success — the dear little one died before he could understand or repeat it. When his brother was told of his death, he was silent for a moment, and then looking up at his mother, said : " Johnny can say 'hallelujah' now, mother." Mothers, many of your little ones could not understand the wonderful story of the cross here, nor sing the praises of their Redeemer while nestled in your arms, but they have been taught the music of the upper temple, and now sing among the celestial choristers. Blessed thought!

*For in that clime towards which we reach,
Through times mysterious dim unfolding,
The little ones with cherub smile
Are still our Father's face beholding.*

*So said His voice in whom we trust,
When in Judea's realm a preacher,
He made a child confront the proud,
And be in simple guise their teacher.*

God will not leave the infant spirit to its own resources in the heavenly world. He will appoint its teachers to assist in its development. There are noble and exalted spirits in heaven who have lived for ages at that great fountain of all wisdom, knowledge and goodness. They are the sons of the morning who witnessed the opening glories of creation; and there are all the pure and the good who have passed from this state of being. These pure and exalted minds may find much of their happiness in opening the treasures of their higher wisdom and knowledge to infant spirits, and in leading them up the crystal streams of truth.

There are sweet-spirited persons here who love children, and attract little ones to them. There is the attractive spirit of sympathy and love about them that peculiarly fits them for the noble work of educating children. Millions of such persons have passed away from earth, and are now residents of that heavenly land. It may be that infant spirits are confided to the care of these sainted ones. This is a sweet thought, and full of comfort to sorrowing mothers.

The capability to love increases as the soul grows in the likeness of the Savior. Oh, then, how much better do those sainted spirits love children now than they did while on earth? "With what joy they receive the new-born angel into their happy company, and how tenderly they lead it down in the flowing paths of knowledge. We love our children here. They are the light and joy of our homes, but they are loved and cared for more tenderly in the heavenly school than even parents can love and care for them here.

Longfellow sings sweetly of his little daughter who had gone to this heavenly school —

*In that great cloister's stillness and seclusion,
By guardian angels led,
Safe from temptation, safe from sin's pollution,
She lives whom we call dead.*

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

Here we are imperfect, and our knowledge of God and his wonderful works is very limited, and we may, and sometimes do, teach our children wrong; but in heaven their teachers have a more thorough knowledge of the wonders of the ever unfolding universe. They know even as also they are known. The angels were present and witnessed the creation of the vast universe of worlds, and have been cognizant of all the sublime developments of the infinite purposes of God since that period; are well read in the history of his great empire; knew the Savior in his pre-incarnate glory; witnessed his wonderful humiliation in becoming incarnate and dying to for man's redemption, and see the depths of his love as

we can not now. How well qualified, then, are they to teach infant spirits; to guide them into all truth, to make them acquainted with the "great and marvelous works" of God.

This is a beautiful world. It is written all over with the great thoughts of God. It is filled with the sunshine of his love — with beautiful flowers and fragrance. The birds come and sing to us their sweet songs, and the music of the murmuring brook fills our souls with gladness. The infant is welcomed into this world with smiles and kisses. Sweet, loving words cheer them, and they are watched over by the sleepless vigilance of a mother's undying love. They are sent here as to an infant school to learn the rudiments of divine knowledge. Parents, brothers, sisters, associates and all nature are their teachers.

This is a wonderful school; but heaven is more replete with beauty than earth. That is a better school than this. It is a higher department. There are better teachers, and the infant mind will unfold its mental and spiritual faculties more rapidly under the genial influence of that school, than was possible here. Blessed thought!

The shadow of a great grief has fallen over all that is bright and beautiful in your home; over all that is dearly loved your hearts weep, yet the tears that fall for the loss of what the heart held dear, may wash away selfishness so that the purified affections wing their flight to the home of angels. You gaze no longer on the loved form of your beautiful child. The cradle hymn is hushed, the mother's fingers no longer linger over the garments destined to beautify the little form; but now that the first deep grief is hushed, you can look, by an eye of faith, into the home of angels, and see him clothed in robes of immortality, crowned with a garland of unfading flowers, and led by angel hands through the beautiful gardens of paradise. He comes no more with his questions for you to answer, but he goes to the sweet, spiritual angels, who lead "unto living fountains of waters," and guide him into all truth.

Here our children go to school, but they are too often exposed to evil influences, and are sometimes led astray from the paths of virtue. There are wicked scholars in all earthly schools, but it is not so with the heavenly school to which our little ones go when they pass from this department into the great school-house of God.

There are no evil influences there calculated to defile their pure minds, and turn their thoughts from God. All is pure and elevating in that school, and all are sweet and good. Their thoughts are as pure as the dew drops that sparkle in the light of the morning sun, their desires chaste as angel's thoughts, and their affections warm with the love of Christ. That school is governed and led on by the hand of love. Under the care and in the school of Christ, in heaven, we have reason to believe that the deathless spirit of the child will be led on to intellectual and moral perfection. It will not remain a child in knowledge forever, but will advance until it shall be equal to the loftiest intelligence among the angels of God in heaven.

In the rosebud is folded up all the beauty and fragrance of the full-blown rose, and in the infant mind are the unfolded powers of an angel. In heaven, under the tuition of Christ, they will be developed. One reason why we desire our children to remain with us in this life is, that we may train and develop their powers, and nothing affords the parent so much happiness as to witness the intellectual growth of his children as their minds and gifts unfold under the genial influence of education. We want our children to live that we may see them grow up to physical and intellectual manhood, and one of the saddest sights of earth is to see one richly endowed fade away from the earth as the rainbow from the cloud; but, the light of the gifted spirit has not gone out in the darkness of the grave. Death has only triumphed

over the body. It can not touch the spirit. The body may lie moldering in the tomb, but the spirit shines in other climes—a star of day. There it will become all the fond parent hoped for here, and infinitely more. It will attain an intellectual and spiritual status impossible to reach in this life. Great victories may be won here, rich trophies gathered on fields of intellectual struggle, and glorious attainments secured; but they fall as far short of what will be secured in the spirit world as earth is beneath heaven. Could we draw aside the veil that separates the spirit world from us and see the glorified spirits of our children there, we would feel as the poet did when he sung—

*Thou bright and star-like spirit,
That in my vision wild
I see, 'mid heaven's seraphic host—
Oh, canst thou be my child ?*

*My grief quenched in wonder,
And pride arrests my sighs;
A branch from this unworthy stock
Now blossoms in the skies.*

*Our hopes of thee were lofty;
But have we cause to grieve?
Oh, could our fondest, proudest wish,
A nobler fate conceive?*

*The little weeper, tearless,
The child snatched from sin,
The babe to more than manhood grown
Ere childhood did begin ?*

*And I, thy earthly teacher,
Would blush thy powers to see;
Thou art to me a parent now,
And I a child to thee.*

A beautiful little child died, and all robed for the grave was laid in the coffin on the morning of the burial. The weeping friends, placed in her little hand a small bouquet of flowers, among which was an unopened bud of the rose of Sharon. The lid was then placed on the coffin and the funeral services performed, when, after a lapse of a few hours, the lid was removed, and the friends gathered around to look upon her for the last time. The bud had become a full blown rose, while held in the hand of death. "What a beautiful symbol of the child's death! To the dear little one it was but the opening of the flower bud. The soul bloomed into the beauty of immortality in the paradise of God.

*This is but the bud of being, the dim dawn,
The twilight of our day, the vestibule,
Life's theater as yet is shut, and death,
Strong "death alone can heave the massive bar,
This gross impediment of clay remove,
And make such an embryo of existence free.*

Death opens a new and holier life to the child. In heaven it is an angel, and in the school of angels.

*There's many an empty cradle;
There's many a vacant bed,
There's many a lonely bosom
Whose joy and light have fled;
For, thick in every graveyard,
The little hillocks lie,
And every hillock represents
An angel in the sky.*

Our dear departed children are safe in the arms of Jesus, and we shall meet them all again in our heavenly home. They are waiting for us over there.

*I had a little cradle,
And a little face slept there,
It was the glory of my home
The childish beauty rare ;
And now I have a little grave,
Do thou be still, my heart,
God doth well and he hath fixed
For me the better part.*

*The cradle now is put away,
(I scarce can see through tears,)
That little grave, it will be mine
Through all life's coming years,
Sometimes the form would stray
From out its cradle bed ;
That little grave will hold it well.
Till earth gives up her dead.*

*It is enough — my change-full life
Hath this one thing secure,
This precious grave—a child in heaven.
A child forever pure.
My child is safe—forever safe,
And must patient be ;
Until I too look through the veil,
Christ and my babe to see.*

DISCOURSE IV.

SHALL WE KNOW OUR CHILDREN IN HEAVEN?

*Thy days, my darling, were few,
An Angel's morning visit,
That came and vanished with the dew ;—
'Twas here — 'tis gone — where is it ?
I can not tell to what sweet dell
The angels may have borne thee :
But this I know, thou canst not go
Where my heart will fail to find thee.*

"I shall go to him." (II. SAMUEL 12 : 23.)

DAVID'S little boy died under peculiar circumstances, and he was deeply affected ; for he knew that his wicked conduct was the cause of his death, and he was humbled under the mighty hand of God. He felt his sinfulness as never before, but he did not give up. in despair. There was a fountain of consolation still open to him, and he drank deeply of its life-giving waters. He knew that his child still lived somewhere in God's universe, and that when he left this world he would go to it. He said to his servants, "Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." This language implies that David expected to meet and know his child in the spirit world. This hope was his support in that dark hour of sorrow, and it has sustained millions since then.

Assured that there is another state of being, one of the first questions that conies up is, " Shall we be able to recognize our friends in heaven ?" To me this is a question full of interest, for the loved ones who have passed over into that beautiful home are near and dear to me,— if not personally, they are in sympathy and love. I think of them as remembering and loving me still, for though they have ascended to a higher realm, and are encircled by brighter and happier scenes, they are the same beings, and have the same love and sympathy that they had here. The difference is in degree of development and not in nature.

Among all the attractions of heaven, one of the sweetest is the hope of recognizing my friends there, but all do not feel thus. There are many who do not feel any interest in this question, and the reason is they have never suffered the loss of friends. They are in good health, prospering in business, and the angel of death has never visited their homes. The dear ones that God has given them are still with them, and are the light and joy of their homes. They know not what it is to lose loved ones by the hand of death, and it is difficult for them to think of heaven as their home; but with those who have had dear ones, parents and children, brothers and sisters, to leave them and ascend to heaven, it is very different. "When our family circle has been broken, and loved ones taken from us, how different we feel. Then heaven is a reality to us, and we love to think of it as the home of our dear ones. Every question connected with it becomes one of interest to us, for we have precious treasures there. Next to the thought that our friends are happy in heaven, there is nothing so sweet and comforting as the idea that we shall know them there, and renew the loves of old. This is a precious thought to me.

Peter says, "Be ready always to give an answer' to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." I have philosophical and scriptural reasons for believing the doctrine of heavenly recognition. It is reasonable and scriptural. It is the first and last demand of our nature.

The affections demand it, and millions have been comforted by it in the darkest hours of bereavement. There is a natural desire and longing in the human heart to meet and renew the friendship and love of friends that have passed into heaven. How strong the desire of the mother to meet her child, and clasp it to her heart again! This desire never dies out of her soul, and she feels that those dear ones who have gone to heaven are her children still. God planted this desire in the mother's heart, and he never creates a desire but what he makes arrangements to meet it. We find this to be true as far as our knowledge reaches, and the doctrine of heavenly recognition meets the longings of the mother's heart. The child always remains a child to its mother.

When President Garfield's mother learned that he had been shot she exclaimed, " Who could be so cruel as to shoot my baby?" She thought not of him as the profound scholar, the heroic warrior, the admired statesman, and honored president. He was simply her baby, and she will think of him as such in heaven.

Mother, were your child to leave your home and go to some distant land, and years after you remove to the same place, what would be the first impulse of your heart when you landed there? Would it not be to hunt him up ? Thus it will be when you go to heaven, where your children now are, and is it possible that you will not know them when you meet them there? Certainly not, for we feel that heavenly recognition is a want of our nature—a constitutional demand. We long for it; our hearts crave it; we feel that it must be so.

This burning desire constructs for itself the faith and hope, and who dares to say that the faith is irrational? We may as well suppose that the infinitely wise and good Creator endows the stomach with eternal craving for food without making any provision to meet it. Such a supposition is irrational, and impeaches the wisdom and goodness of God.

There are many reasons why I want to go to heaven. God the living Father, Christ the glorious Redeemer, the holy angels are there, and it is a beautiful country, embracing everything that is grand and glorious in nature, intellect, and morals; but among all these things is the sweet inspiring thought that I shall know my mother there, and have the privilege of personal converse with her. This is confirmed by the fact that old associations are deep seated, and very precious. The desire to renew them is very strong, and dwelling in the same place where we know that our children are, our affection for them will impel us to seek them. Said one: "It has pleased God to take five children from me; but I have never lost one, and never shall. When I have a child that Christ covets with a divine coveting, and he says to me, in words of tenderness, ' Will you not give me the child, and let me take care of it instead of yourself? ' my flesh remonstrates, but my heart says, Lord, take him and adopt him. It is our privilege to feel that when our children are taken from us, they are not lost to us, but only passed on before us to the spirit world, to become angelic beings around the burning throne of God." They are our children still, and we can think of them as such.

In all ages and among all people men have cherished the hope of meeting and knowing their friends in the spirit world. This was not planted by any one form of religion, for it has been received under all forms of religion. It was planted by God in our moral and social nature. Socrates says, "Who would not part with a great deal to purchase a meeting with Orpheus and Homer? If it be true that this is to be the consequence of death, I could even be able to die often. What pleasure will it give to live with Palmades and others who suffered unjustly, and compare my fate with theirs?"

Cicero, living before Christ's coming, said: " Oh, glorious day, when I shall retire from this low and sordid scene to associate with the divine assembly of departed spirits, and not with the one that I have just now mentioned, but with my dear Cato, the best of sons, and most faithful of men. It was my sad fate to lay his body on the funeral pile, when, by the course of nature, I had reason to hope he would perform the same last office to me. This soul, however, did not desert me, but still looked back on me in its flight to those happy mansions to which he was assured I would one day follow him. If I seemed to bear his death with fortitude, it was by no means that I did not most sensibly feel the loss I had sustained. It was because I was supported by the consoling reflection that we could not long be separated." This hope was universal among the nations of the earth, and this proves that it was planted in the human mind by our Creator. Will he not provide for the wants of his own creation?

We will know ourselves in heaven. That is, we will know that we are same beings that lived here, and not other beings. I shall know my own name, who is was in this life, where I lived and how I labored here. How shall we know this? Only by taking into consideration our past history through the aid of memory. This will enable us in heaven to know who we are and where we came from. We will know to what family we belonged while in this world. The redeemed that John saw and heard sing in heaven remembered to what people they belonged while in this world. They sang, "Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." (Rev. 5 : 9.) The means by which we shall know ourselves in heaven will enable us to recognize our friends, and I can not see how memory can exist without personal recognition.

There are facts in human experience that confirm the doctrine of heavenly recognition. Persons when dying have seen and recognized friends who had passed into the spirit world years before. Stephen, when dying, saw heaven opened and the glory of God, and Jesus on his right hand. There are latent powers in the human soul which when quickened into action enables man to see spiritual beings, and some times in the dying hour this faculty of the soul is quickened into action and the dying Christian sees the angelic messengers that have come forth to welcome him home to heaven.

In illustration of this truth take the following facts: Mrs. Helen Williams says: "Not long ago I stood by the death-bed of a little girl. Every fiber of her soul recoiled from the thought of death. 'Don't let me die,' she said, 'don't let me die. Hold me fast. Oh, I can't go.' 'Jenny,' I said, 'you have two little brothers in the other world, and there are thousands of tender-hearted people over there who will love you.' But she cried out again, despairingly, 'Don't let me go; they are strangers over there' But even as she was pleading her little hands relaxed their clinging hold from my waist, and lifted themselves eagerly aloft. The face was turned upward; but it was her eyes that told the story. They wore filled with the light of divine recognition. They saw something plainly that we could not see; and they grew brighter and brighter. 'Mamma,' she said, 'Mamma, they are not strangers. I'm not afraid.' The form relapsed among the pillows and she was gone." As the recognition of familiar faces

dissipated the child's fear, so may the Christian expect that the pains of dissolution will be forgotten in the sight of Him whom his soul loves and with whom he has been in daily communion from the hour of his conversion.

Years ago I was intimately acquainted with a Methodist minister who died in the midst of his usefulness. Two of his children were sick at the same time, and one of them, a beautiful girl, died two days before he did. For fear of increasing his suffering, his friends did not inform him of her death, but as he drew near to this mysterious change, the spirit world opened to him; and angels and the spirits of some of his departed friends were visible to him. Among them was the spirit of his own child, which had gone before him. This was the first intimation that he had of her death, and turning to his wife he said, "Martha, why did you not tell me that our child was dead?" He saw and recognized her among the celestial visitors. What does this prove? That the soul survives the death of the body. That sometimes the spirits of the departed are permitted to come back to meet dear ones who are passing out of the body into the spirit world. That we shall know our friends in heaven. This brother knew his child after she had passed out of the world.

What a glorious future this doctrine opens to us. It wipes away our tears, comforts our hearts, and enables us to rejoice even in tribulation.

*Oh, happy world! Oh, glorious place!
Where all, who are forgiven,
Shall find their loved and lost below,
And hearts, like meeting streams, shall flow
Forever one — in heaven.*

Our dear little ones who have entered into the home of angels can not come back to us, and we would not have them return; but we shall, when our work is done here, go to them. The poet sings sweetly of the death of his little boy:

*I know that he will not come back to me,
To glad me with his happy ways and wit,
I know his dear, bright face I shall not see—
With his heart-love or kindling fancy lit;
I know that he is gone, and oh, the sorrow—
That makes each day the type of each to-morrow !*

*I can not see him in the wonder-realm
Whither the angels bore him from my arms ;
If woe might less my weary eyes o'erwhelm,
So I could glimpse some shadow of its charms—
It may be then my grief would grow more tender,
Tranced with the dream of heaven's eternal splendor.*

*But heaven is so far and earth so drear,
Without the smile and presence of my boy,
Without the sense of his sweet service here,
And shut from knowledge of his new employ;
How can I still my aching heart's fond yearning—
Though only vain and wrong—for his returning ?*

' I know that he will not come back to me !'

*The royal mourner in his, anguish said;
With grief as great, I know as much as he
Beside the grave where my delight is laid :
If that were all of hope the King had spoken,
His words the gloom of graves had never broken !*

*' But I shall go to him !' O ! faith sublime;
No Psalm of David this for joy excels:
Its power and promise echo through all time,
And Death's sure solace in its music swells :
Because my knowledge lacked the King's completeness
I drank his cup of woe, but missed the sweetness.*

*O Lion of the tribe of Judah! Thou
Hast conquered death for me, as for the King!
And by Thy grace my grief I banish now—
And all his anthem o'er my dead I sing:
I know he'll not come back to me and sorrow;
But I shall go to him some sweet to-morrow !*

DISCOURSE V.

ONE YEAR IN HEAVEN.

*Beautiful spirit — dwelling in light,
And crowned with immortal roses,
We, in the chill of our earthly night,
Mid the blossoms that droop, and the buds that blight,
Look yearningly up to your splendid hight,
Where eternal calm reposes :
And plead to gaze into your pure, still face,
To hold for a moment your living hands,
To know all your life in its varying grace,
In the depths of those mystical lands,
With their fresh, bright bloom.
And their singing birds,
Their rythmical flow
Of golden words,
That only the angels know.
Our wings are hidden, but yours are grown,
And have carried you cut of our reach,
We can not follow where you have flown
Save by our human speech.
We breathe soft whispers into the air,
And we think they are heard by the angels there !
O Alice, dear Alice, sweet Alice,—we know
You have not forgotten us here below ;
Be with us often, and help us to climb
From our low, sad place, to your bright sublime."*

"She is not dead." (LUKE 8: 52.)

ONE year ago today the raven-winged angel of death visited one of our homes, gathered in his cold arms a beautiful girl of twelve summers, and carried her away to his dark dominion. A little green hillock marks the spot where her body rests in the dreamless sleep of death.

Since that day, the vernal loveliness of spring has bloomed into the rich harvest of summer; summer has mellowed down into the golden-tinted beauties of autumn; the solemn grandeur of autumn gave place to the dreary reign of winter; and now spring is opening upon us again; but where is the loved one that faded, as a beautiful vision, from the home circle and the Sabbath-school? Has the bright, sunny spirit ceased to be, and all that wealth of love and affection perished forever? Oh, no! There comes a voice from the shadowy realm that says, " she is not dead." Her life was not cast up by the ocean of eternity to float a moment upon its waves and then sink into nothingness. When she left us, she only put off the garments of mortality, and soared away to the higher realms of life and happiness. Death has

only to do with the body; it can not touch the soul. "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul."

Not long since I saw a beautiful picture that illustrates the scriptural doctrine of death. In the foreground there was a graveyard with its trees, flowers, and tombs. Beside one of the graves. stood a weeping mother clad in the garments of sorrow. A deep shadow rested upon the whole scene. All was lonely and sad, and the very gloom of death brooded over it. This is the earthly side of death. But away off in the background of the picture was a bright, beautiful scene, an angel with flowing robes, encircled in a halo of light, with the child of the weeping mother in her arms, was floating away to the realms of eternal day. This is the celestial side of death, but we only see it now by faith.

Our Savior pictures a scene from the experience of one of God's humble children, that scatters the gloom that broods over the grave, and illuminates the dark valley with the light of the bright world beyond. Beside the gate of a rich man, on the cold ground, lies a helpless beggar. He is clothed in rags, fed on the crumbs from the rich man's table, and the dogs are his only friends. He is struggling in the last agonies of death. This is a sad, sad scene; but there is another side bright and beautiful. It is invisible to mortal eyes, but the Savior, with a gentle hand puts aside the shadowy curtain, and reveals to us the holy angels hovering over the dying man, comforting him in his loneliness, and waiting to carry him to the bosom of Abraham. "When the struggle is over, and he has cast off the garments of mortality, they encircle him in their arms of love and transport him to their rainbow home, where he is "cradled on the beating bosom of eternal love." This picture shows us both sides of death, and teaches us that the good never die. It is only the body that perishes; and the young spirit that passed away, one year ago today, still lives. "She is not dead."

*As a cloud of the sunset, slow melting into heaven,
As a star that is lost when the daylight is given,
As a glad dream of slumber, which wakens in bliss,
She has passed to the world of the Holy, from this.*

When a child dies the anxious inquiry arises in the mind, has the loved one perished, or does she still live? Reason and revelation teach us that it is only the body that perishes in death. Death to the child is simply opening the door to the glorious life of heaven, and the Christian parent can sing:

*Yet while mourning, O, our lost one,
Come no visions of despair;
Seated on thy tomb, Faith's angel
Saith, thou art not, art not there.*

Where then art thou? With the Savior. Blest, forever blest.

What seems to us to be death is only a transformation. It is a birth into a purer and happier life. We go at eventide to the grave of our child and we say, "She is dead;" but the Savior says, "She is not dead." Sweetly and truly sings the poet:

*It is not death to die —
To leave this weary road,
And 'midst the brotherhood on high,
To be at home with God.*

*It is not death to close
The eye long dimmed by tears,
And wake in glorious repose,
To spend eternal years.*

*It is not death to bear
The wrench that sets us free
From dungeon chain, to breathe the air
Of boundless liberty.
It is not death to fling
Aside this sinful dust,
And rise on strong, exultant wing,
To live among the just.*

*Jesus, thou Prince of life!
Thy chosen can not die !
Like thee, they conquer in the strife,
To reign with thee on high.*

The next life is a continuation of this, and death is only a transition in which we advance toward perfection. Our child, when she enters the spirit world, is the same being she was here. She is not changed into some strange, mysterious being that we would not recognize as our child, if we should meet her. The only change is, she has put off her body of flesh and blood, and is more herself now than ever before. She appears in the same form, only more beautiful, as the spiritual is more beautiful than the material. She possesses the same powers of mind, and the same love, affection, and sympathy.

*There is no death; what seems so is transition:
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life Elysian,
Whose portals we call death.*

The germ of the future life is in this, and that is only the outgrowth of the present. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." (John 3: 36.) The body has not life in itself; the soul is the life of the body, and death is the soul casting it off, and emerging into a higher life. The golden-winged butterfly bursts open the worm-formed larva, and soars through the skies. The chrysalis was not life, but only its covering. Thus the body is the covering of the soul, and this is cast off forever at death. There are facts in nature that illustrate this transition. In every case where there is a transition from one mode of life to another, and a higher, we find the germs of the future being - wrapped up in the organization of the present being, as in the case of the moth, caterpillar and locust. In their transition they leave the body behind, and gain much; but the identity of being remains unbroken through every stage of transformation. Thus it is with our child. She casts off the outer body, and enters into a higher and broader realm of thought and enjoyment.

While wrapped up in its chrysalis state, the germ, or embryo butterfly, is silently weaving for itself, under the outer body in which, when completed, it comes out of the old into the enjoyment of a higher life. May it not be that thus the pure soul is silently, beneath the coarser exterior, weaving for itself the

unseen and refined tissue-work of its future being. Is not the Christian growing, not only in soul but also in body, like the chrysalis butterfly, towards his glorious transformation, which is called " the resurrection at the last day."

Christ speaks of the resurrection as always present in Him. To Martha He said, " Thy brother shall rise again." She, having in her mind the resurrection as a sudden resuscitation of the body in the last day, answered, " I know that he shall rise again in the last day." To this Jesus replied, "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."

There is a transforming power in communion with Christ that changes both soul and body. The outer man gleams radiant with beauty from the holy light that dwells within. Moses spent forty days with God in Mount Sinai, and it so transformed his whole nature, soul and body, that his face shone with such brilliancy that the people could not look upon it, and he had to wear a veil.

John says, " Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is" (I. John 3:2). It is through the transforming power of association with the Savior that we are to be changed into his image, and if forty days wrought such a change in Moses, what must a year have worked in the young spirit which ascended to his holy presence one year ago today ? She was beautiful in the innocence of childhood, then, but how much more lovely must she be now. "As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (I. Cor. 15 :49). Could the parents see her as she now is, they would exclaim :

*Thou bright and star-like spirit,
That in our visions wild,
We see 'mid heaven's seraphic host,,
O, canst thou be our child?*

*Our grief is quenched in wonder,
And pride arrests our sighs;
A branch from the unworthy stock
Now blossoms in the skies.*

*Our hopes of thee were lofty;
But have we cause to grieve?
O, could our fondest, proudest wish,
A nobler fate conceive?*

However much the Christian may learn of God and his wonderful, works while in this state, there is infinitely more that he does not yet know. He has only gathered up a few fragments of truth and knowledge, while the vast domain of wisdom and knowledge lies all unexplored before him. He enters into the spirit world with the same knowledge that he leaves this, but he will continue to learn. His mind will be unfolded under the genial influences of that higher realm, and the boundaries of his knowledge will widen at every step. This is plainly asserted in the Scriptures: "We know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known." (I. Cor. 13: 9-13.) Paul

expected to learn much more of God, and the sublime mysteries of the ever-unfolding, but ever-mysterious universe, than he had been able to acquire in this life.

When the young spirit ascended to heaven, one year ago today, she took with her the knowledge that she had acquired here, but that was very limited, for she was yet only on the threshold of the great temple of wisdom and knowledge. She had plucked a bud here and gathered a flower there; but had not enough for even one bouquet. For one year she has been ranging the beautiful gardens of heaven, listening to the songs of angels, mingling with the exalted spirits of the just made perfect; witnessing the unfolding of God's infinite purposes; gazing on the matchless grandeur of the uncreated glory of God and the Lamb. This must have developed, perfected, and increased her mental powers, and augmented her store of knowledge far beyond anything that we can conceive of now. Blessed thought:

*She is not dead—the child of our affection,
But gone into that school
Where she no longer needs our poor protection.
And Christ himself doth rule.*

*In that great cloister's stillness and seclusion,
By guardian angels led,
Safe from temptation, safe from sin's pollution,
She lives whom we call dead.*

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

*Thus do we walk with her, and keep unbroken
The bond which nature gives,
Thinking that our remembrance, though unspoken.
May reach her where she lives.*

*Not as a child shall we again behold her;
For when, with rapture wild,
In our embrace we again enfold her,
She will not be a child,*

*But a fair maiden in her Father's mansion.
Clothed with celestial grace,
And beautiful with the soul's expansion,
Shall we behold her face.*

Sin has injured our moral nature, and our renovation from it is a gradual process, commenced in regeneration and completed in heaven. In this world every Christian must say with Paul: "Not as though I had already attained, either was already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3 : 12.) There the Christian is delivered from the love and domination of sin, and puts on Christ; but there is a growth in grace and in the knowledge of Christ that is endless. Through all the ceaseless ages of eternity he will be transformed more and more into the divine image. In heaven his growth will be more rapid, for the surrounding there are more favorable. The society there consists of an innumerable colony of angels; the general assembly and

church of the first-born; God the Judge of all; the spirits of just men made perfect, and Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant. What a blessed society is this! In such society how rapidly the child of God must grow in the likeness of the Savior. One year in such association must work a wonderful change. It is not possible for us to now fully understand what that beauty will be. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." We are to be like Christ, and when we realize all that this means, then, and not until then, will we know how great are our obligations to Him.

*When I stand before the throne,
Dressed in beauty not my own ;
When I see Thee as Thou art,
Love Thee with unsinning heart,
Then, Lord, shall I fully know,
Not till then, how much I owe.*

The Angel of Death conies to our homes, and he takes away loved ones; but we are not left without hope. The angel of mercy tells us of a better land into which they have gone to be with the Savior.

*Mother, I've news for thee from heaven ;
Thy daughter boweth near the throne.
O, canst thou not for her rejoice,
Though thou art left alone ?*

*Hast thou not seen her lovely eye
Gaze on thee through her glittering tears.
Though thou didst strive from every ill
To shield her tender years ?*

*Mother, thy daughter weeps no more,
For all her tears are wiped away ;
Exhaled like dew-drops from the rose
Beneath the sun's bright ray.*

*Mother, thy daughter is in heaven,
And pain can never reach her there ;
No sickness comes to those who breathe:
That pure, delightful air.*

*Look up with Faith's observant eye,
And see thine angel daughter now.
I would'st not wish to call her back
To this dark world—would'st thou?
'O, no ! O, no !' I hear thee say.
'My Savior hath his promise kept
He comforts me, and yet I must
Weep, for Jesus wept.'*

The mother can say;

*Mollie, my last, my youngest love.
The crown of every other,
Though thou art born in heaven above,
I am thine only mother ;
Nor will affection let me
Believe thou canst forget me.*

*Then thee in heaven and I on earth,
May this our hope delight us—
That thou wilt hail my second birth
When death shall reunite us,
Where worlds no more can sever
Parent and child forever.*

Has the loved one perished ? All that we can see of the child is cold and dead; but is there not something in them that death can not kill? Is there not some part of them that is not buried in the grave? Reason and revelation teach us that there is a spirit that survives the destruction of the body, and will live forever. "We are always confident," said Paul, "knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (for we walk by faith, not by sight:) we are confident, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord, wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him." (II. Cor. 5: 6-9.)

A modern writer says: " The phoenix, a fabled bird of antiquity, when it felt the advancing chill of age, built its own funeral urn, and fired its pyre, by means which nature's instinct had taught. All its plumage and its former beauty became ashes; but then would rise the young. Beautiful from the urn of death and chambers of decay, would the fledgling come, with its eyes turned toward the sun, and essaying its dark velvet wings, sprinkled with gold and fringed with silver, on the balmy air, rising a little higher, until at length, in the full confidence of flight, it gives a cry of joy, and soon becomes a glittering speck on the ocean horizon. Lovely voyager of earth, bound on its heavenward journey to the sun! So rises the spirit-bird from the ruins of the body—the funeral urn which its Maker built—the death fire. So towers away to its home; to the pure elements of spirituality, to dip its proud wings in the fountain of eternal bliss.

So shall our precious humanity survive from its ashes of a burning world. So beautifully shall the unchanged soul soar within the disk of eternity's great luminary, with undazzled eye and unscorched wings. The Phoenix of immortality, taken to its rainbow home, and cradled on the beating bosom of eternal love. "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." (II. Cor. 5:1.) Glorious hope! Weeping mother,

*Look aloft ! The spirits risen,
Death can not the soul imprison :
Tis in heaven that spirits dwell,
Glorious though invisible.*

The question is frequently asked, " "Where does the spirit go when it leaves the body?" This is an

important inquiry, and our only guide is the Scriptures: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return to God who gave it." (Ecl. 12: 7.) Jesus said to the penitent thief on the cross, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke 23: 45.) Paul said that he had "a desire to depart and be with Christ." (Phil. 1:23.) Again, he said he was "willing to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." (II. Cor_. 5: 8.) When the beggar died he "was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom." (Luke 16: 23.) These scriptures show us that the souls of the elect go to the Savior when they leave the body.

*One gentle sigh their fetter breaks,
We scarce can say, 'They've gone !'
Before the willing spirit takes
The mansion near the throne.*

This doctrine is full of consolation to the surviving friends. If my child is with the Savior, then I know that it is safe and happy. Life is lonelier, and the world has lost many of its charms to me, since the dear one left; but the thought she is with Jesus, brings joy and resignation to the soul.

*No more, oh,, no more sad complaining!
Resign these fond pleasures to earth.
Stay, mother, the thick-falling tear-drops;
This death is a heavenly birth.*

THE END



“Even so, Come Lord Jesus!”
