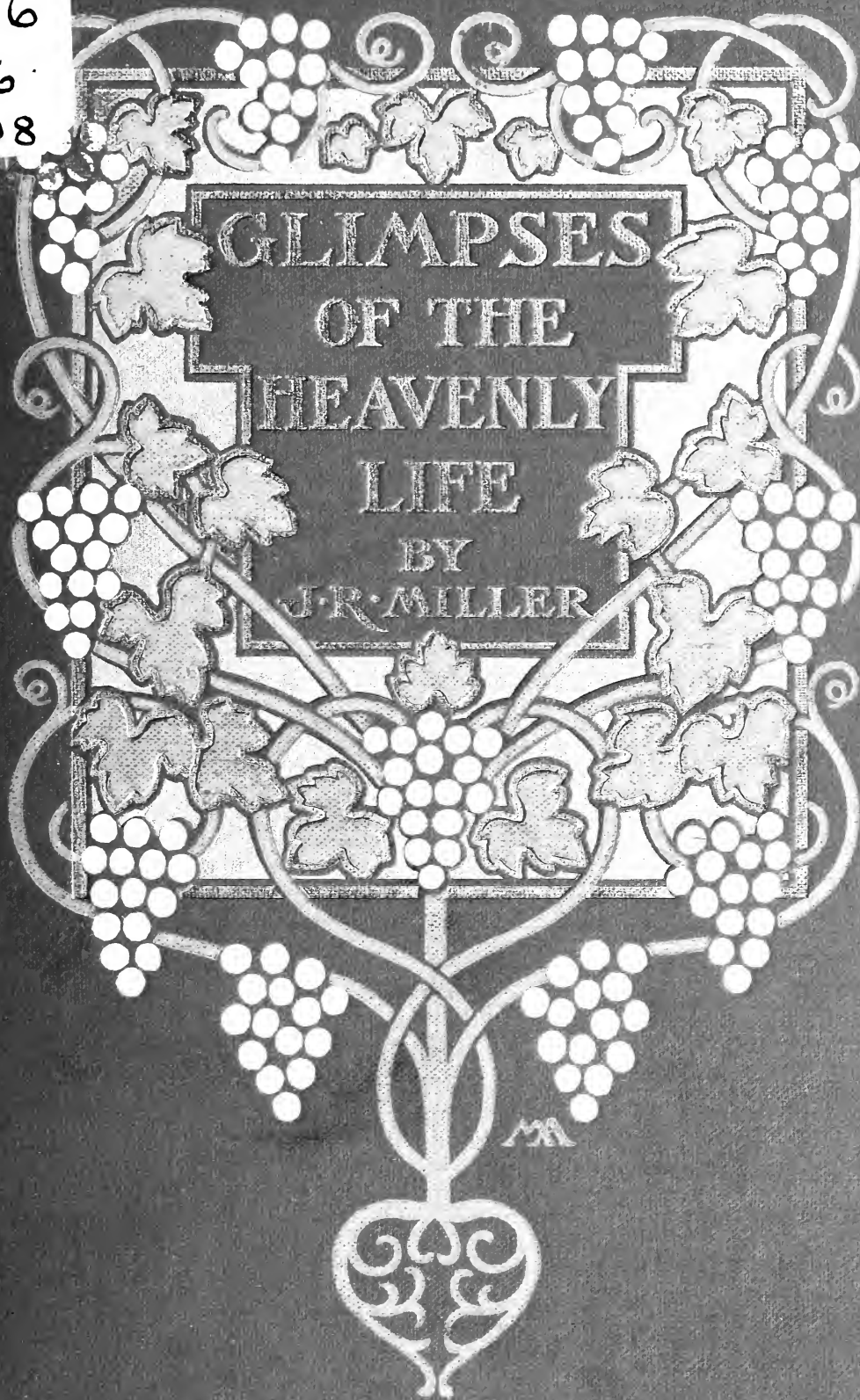


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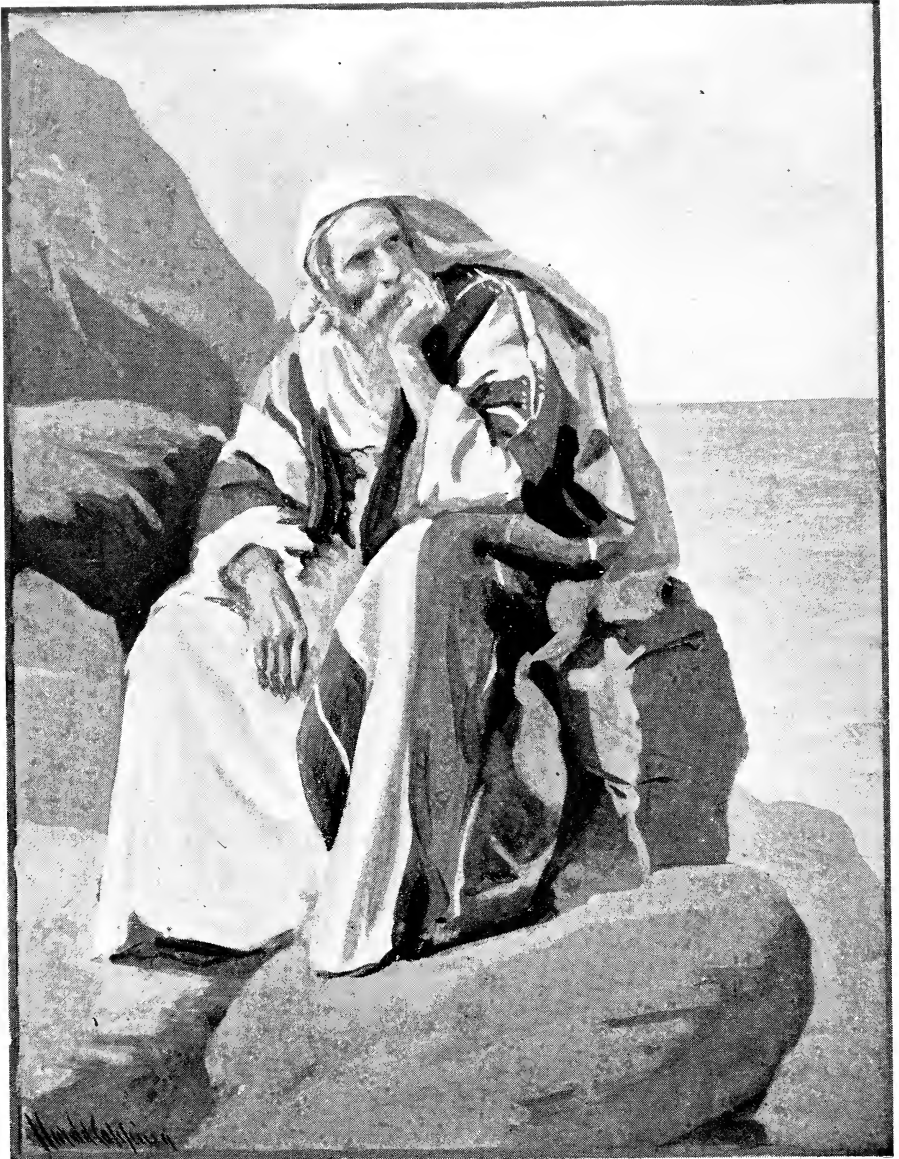
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GLIMPSES OF THE HEAVENLY LIFE





GLIMPSSES
OF THE
HEAVENLY
LIFE

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MANY look out longingly toward another life, in which they implicitly believe, yet of which they can know nothing save in the dimmest, most shadowy way. Loved ones are taken from them into that strange land, and they long then more than ever to know about the country that is the new home of their friends—its beauty, its joys, its fellowships, its occupations. The Bible does not lift the veil, but it gives many glimpses of the heavenly life. It is the purpose of this little book to note some of these glimpses.

J. R. M.

PHILADELPHIA, U.S.A.

“ O Thou who never tak'st from Thy beloved,
 Except to give them more,
When most is gone from our sweet earthly good,
 Then most Thou hast in store.

“ No aching heart nor empty arms again;
 For through these passing hours,
Safe in Thy home and free from every stain,
 Are Thy beloved and ours.”

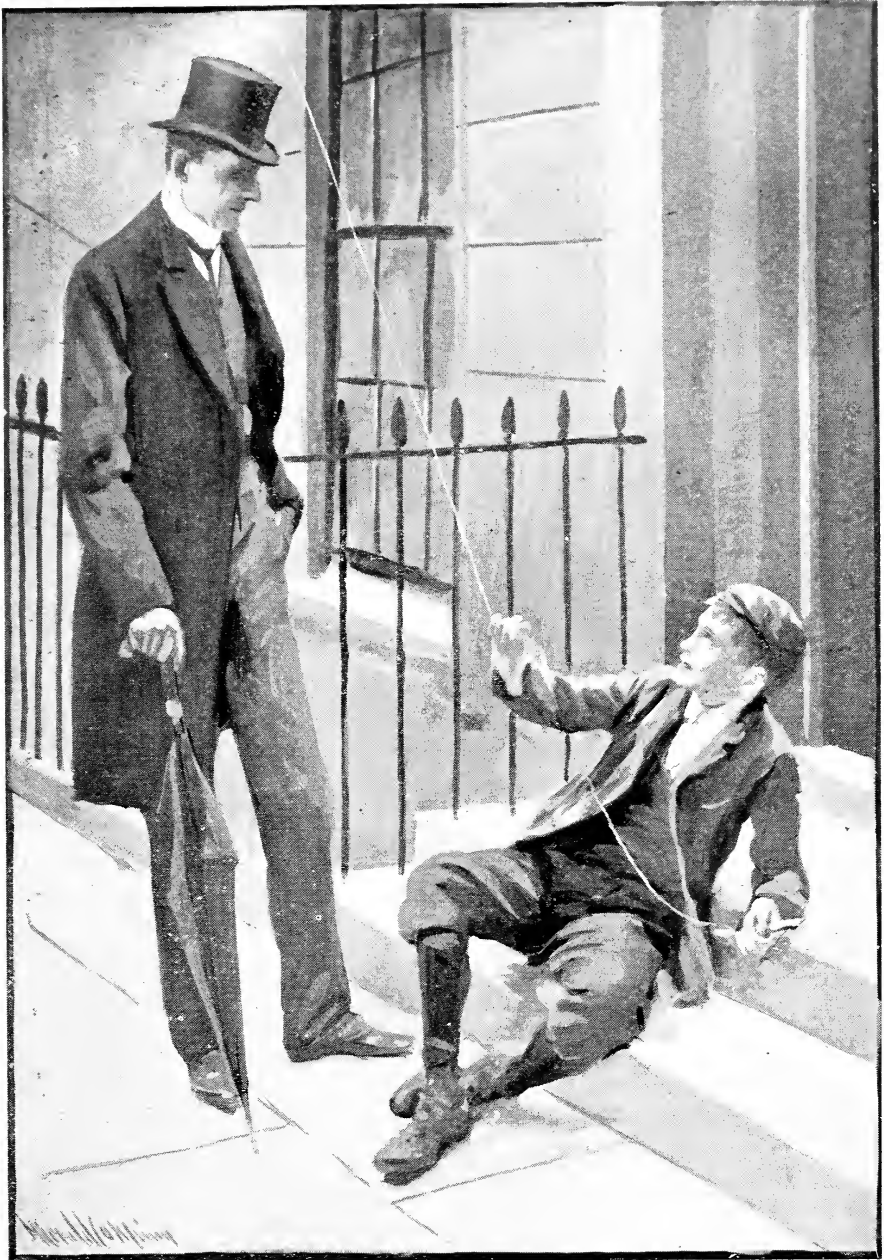


GLIMPSES OF THE HEAVENLY LIFE.

HEAVEN'S gates never open outward. Countless multitudes enter them, to look upon the glories within, but none come back to report to us what they have seen. We often wish we might look upon the beauty of the heavenly home to see what it is, but our wish cannot be granted. Only a thin veil separates heaven from earth, but that veil is impenetrable. No natural eye can see the things that are spiritual. Once when the servant of Elisha was dismayed to find his master surrounded by a company of the enemy's soldiers, his eyes were opened and he saw an inner guard of horses and chariots of fire, round about Elisha. The angels were not summoned there that moment to impress the young man with his master's safety, nor was the vision he saw merely a vision, with no corresponding reality. His eyes were opened for a moment, that he might have a glimpse of what was always there unseen.

If our eyes were opened to see spiritual things, a wonderful splendor would appear on every side. Heaven lies about us, not only in our infancy, but always. Yet we cannot see it. All we can know of it is told us in words which are pictures only, revealings of heavenly things in earthly language. We could not understand any other language. The Incarnation was the divine effort, so to speak, to interpret God to men in words and acts which they could understand. The descriptions of heaven which we have in the Bible are efforts to give us in earthly language some conception of the beauty, the glory, the blessedness, of the things and the experiences of heaven.

We need to train ourselves to think more of heaven. It is the home to which we are journeying, and our thoughts should often be upon it. We need its inspiration and uplifting in our life. When one is travelling toward his home on a dark night, when the road is long and he is weary, he gets courage and strength from the knowledge that in a little while he shall reach the place so dear to him, where his loved ones are. A clear confidence in our hearts that heaven is waiting for us at the end would make us braver and stronger in all our earthly experiences of toil, care, disappointment,



and sorrow. This that we call life is not life — it is but the way to life. The joys we have here, sweet as they may be, are but hints and beginnings of the full, perfect joys that await us. The attainments and achievements of our earthly experience, which are the fruit of so much toil, pain, and struggle are only the faint prophecies and promises of what we shall attain and achieve in the heavenly life.

We miss much if we do not have in our life here the influence of the heavenly hope. A boy sat on a doorstep, in the gathering dusk of the evening, holding a string in his hand. A passer-by, noticing the boy's eager zest and interest, asked him what he was doing that made him so happy. "I am flying my kite," was his answer. "Why, I see no kite," said the gentleman, sweeping the darkening skies with his eyes. "Neither do I," said the boy, "but I feel it pull." We cannot see heaven as we move on in this world, but if it is a reality to our faith, we can feel it pull upon our hearts as we toil and struggle under our burdens.

People tell us sometimes that there is no profit in thinking about heaven while we are on the earth. We would better give our attention to our duties here than let our minds wander off among

the stars. This is true in a sense. Gazing into heaven, trying to see what is within its veil, while we neglect the duties that wait for us every moment, is most unprofitable living. Yet while we do all our earthly tasks diligently and faithfully, we have a right to let our thoughts and affections fly away to the joys that are waiting for us. The vision will put new zest into our hearts for the hard, dull task-work that fills our hands. It assures us that our work and struggles here are not vain. In a little while we shall be through with all failure, all disappointment, all sorrow, and shall be at home where every promise shall be realized, where all weary sowing shall find its rich harvest, where every disappointment shall prove to have been a divine appointment.

An oculist advised a literary worker, who came to him for new glasses, to go out on her porch several times every day, and to look for five or ten minutes at the mountains which were always in view in the distance. "The far-away look," he said, "will rest your eyes after your long hours with manuscripts and proof sheets. This will be better for you than new glasses." The advice proved most wise. She could do her prosaic task-work better after looking at something lofty and



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sublime. We need the far-away look to keep our spiritual life from losing its tone. We have so much to do with earthly things all the while that we almost forget sometimes that there is a heaven above us. Our work here is so strenuous, so unremitting, sometimes so hard, that we scarcely get time to read our Bible or to pray. The tendency is to gravitate more and more toward earthly levels. We need to think often of heaven to keep us in mind that there is a heaven.

There is a story of a man who in youth once found a gold coin on the street. Ever after, as he walked, he kept his eyes on the ground, looking for coins. He found one now and then, but he never saw the trees, the hills, the glorious landscapes, or the blue sky. The tendency of our absorbed business life, with its weary grind and struggle, is to hold our eyes ever on the dusty earth, causing us to miss the sight of the things that are above. St. Paul's counsel is that since we are raised together with Christ, we should seek the things that are above, where Christ is. A life which runs only along on the ground, with no elevation in it, no thought of heaven or of God, no vision of Christ, is unworthy of a child of God. We should get time every day, for a little while,

at least, to think of God, to look into the face of Christ, and to gaze upon the heavenly hills.

The New Testament gives us many glimpses of the heavenly life. The closing chapters of Revelation contain a series of such glimpses. The seer had a vision of "a new heaven and a new earth." This probably does not mean that the earth and the heaven we now see are to be destroyed and a new earth and a new heaven created. Astronomers sometimes report seeing through their telescopes burning worlds, worlds passing through a fiery change. Probably they are not being destroyed, but only renewed, to come out of the fiery ordeal, at length, in new beauty. We may suppose that something like this is what is meant in this vision of a new earth. — not created anew but cleansed, made pure and holy, all the marks of sin and sin's curse removed. The golden age of the world is yet before us. There are some people who get so discouraged by the troubles in their lives and by the sin and moral failure about them, that they come to believe that all things are going to destruction. No: this is our Father's world. On this earth Christ died, and from one of its graves he rose again. This old battered globe is to be made new, and to be fashioned into imperish-



able beauty. Then it will be ready to be the home of redeemed and regenerated men. The work of Christ will not be a failure. The paradise of beauty which was lost through sin is to be restored.

The Bible begins with a garden of Eden, as the home of the unfallen man. It closes with a holy city, glorious and beautiful, the home of redeemed man. Between these two paradises comes a long story of sin, of failure, of sorrow, of struggle, of suffering, a story also of divine love and sacrifice, in the midst of which stands the cross. What we have in the closing chapters of the New Testament is a vision of the completed kingdom of Christ, the home and the life to which we are looking forward—the old heaven and the outworn earth made new.

Take another glimpse. “The sea is no more.” Why will there be no sea in the new earth? Is the sea a blot, a disfigurement, on the face of the earth? Would a sea on the new earth take away from its beauty? We talk about the grandeur of the sea. We can easily suggest its advantages, not only the physical benefits which the earth receives from it, but its commercial value. Why, in this description of the final home of man, is the

absence of a sea named as one of the elements of its beauty and blessedness ?

No doubt the language is symbolic. The sea was a symbol of mystery. In ancient days men stood upon its shore, wondering what its waters covered, and what lay beyond it. They could not cross it in those times, and could only guess what was on the other side. Hence it stood for mystery. Earth is full of mystery. But in heaven the sea is no more—there is no mystery. Here life is full of strange things which we cannot understand,—questions which cannot be answered, providences in which we cannot find love, sorrows which stagger faith. Scarcely a day passes but we hear some one crying, “Why?” and no one can give an answer. Why did God take away the young mother the other night and leave the helpless baby motherless? Why did he call suddenly from earth the strong man in the prime of his life, leaving his young widow to battle alone with the world, and without human help to provide for her children? We cannot answer. There is mystery everywhere. But in the life of heaven there will be no perplexities, no mysteries, no whys. The darkest providences of earth will then be clear. We shall see all unfinished things, all broken



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plans, worked out to completion and shall find love and beauty where all seemed mistake and even cruelty, when we had only part of the story before us. In another of the visions of the book of Revelation there is a sea, but it is a sea of glass, clear as crystal. There is no mystery in it. In the life of heaven there will be no obscurity, nothing uncertain, nothing hid, nothing to perplex.

The sea is always the symbol of storm and strife. It was dreaded in ancient times. Every reference in the Bible to the sea implies fear and danger. Even in modern times, while our wonderful scientific advances have given us a sort of mastery over it, making it a great highway between nations, the medium of commerce for the world, and while our ships traverse it continually, the sea is still wrathful in its power. Think of its cruel storms, of its wrecks, when ships are broken on its rocks, of the destructive energy that makes it terrible to those who are exposed to its fury.

The sea, in this regard, too, is an emblem of life in this world, with its dangers, its cruelties, its storms and wrecks. But in heaven "the sea is no more." In the new earth, there will be no danger, nothing wild and terrible, no fierce storms, no wars, nothing to hurt or annoy. Here nature itself, with

all its beauty and its gentle ministries is full of tragical things — earthquakes, volcanic fires, cyclones, droughts, deserts, avalanches. But in the new earth, nature will be tamed, all its wildness and fury subdued to quietness, and will be like a lamb in its gentleness and peacefulness.

The sea also suggests separation. Even now it is a great and seemingly impassable barrier when we want to get quickly to our friends who are beyond it, or when we want to bring them quickly to us. In ancient times, however, the sea seemed to make an altogether hopeless barrier of separation when it parted friends. St. John was on the Isle of Patmos when he saw the visions of Revelation, while his friends and loved ones were far away. The sea that rolled about his little rocky island seemed to cut him off from them relentlessly and forever. There were no ships passing every day, or even every week, from country to country. In his exile there seemed no hope that he could ever see his friends again. We can imagine St. John, sitting on the cold rocks, homesick and lonely, looking yearningly in the direction of his home, though unable to go to it, and thinking of the sea as most cruel, in that it separated him hopelessly from all that were dear to his heart.

But in heaven "the sea is no more." Its waters are dried up. There will be nothing there to keep friends apart, or to hinder their closest and tenderest association.

An aged Christian woman, alone now in the world, with most of hers in heaven, said to a friend, "If I thought I could go and speak to people I have known on earth, my friends and my loved ones, when I get to heaven, I would be willing to go to-morrow." She seemed to fear that heaven will be a strange place to newcomers, as when one coming from over the sea and arriving in a strange city, sees no familiar face, and meets no one he has ever met before, receives no welcome, and finds no love waiting. But this is not the way it will be in heaven. The moment you touch the edge of the blessed country you will be met by those who have gone before you, and will be welcomed home. "The sea is no more." In heaven there will be nothing to separate any one from those he loves.

It is no shame to our hearts to confess that among the dearest things in heaven will be the friendships begun on earth and continued there. These will mean far more to us than the golden streets, the pearl gates, and all the splendors.

One reason we want to go to heaven is to meet those we love who are there, and a great part of the anticipated joy of heaven is the expectation of meeting those who have grown dear to us, and whom we have lost awhile. Rev. William C. Gannett writes : —

I dreamed of Paradise — and still
 Though sun lay soft on vale and hill,
 And trees were green and rivers bright,
 The one dear thing that made delight
 By sun or stars or Eden weather,
 Was just that we two were together.

I dreamed of heaven, with God so near !
 The angels trod the shining sphere,
 And each was beautiful ; the days
 Were choral work, were choral praise ;
 And yet in heaven's far-shining weather,
 The best still was — we were together.

Heaven is a place of love, where all the scattered friendships of earth shall be gathered up, cleansed, enriched, purified, refined, and elevated, freed from all envies and jealousies, all narrowness and sordidness, and brought together in inseparable union. "The sea is no more."

Take another glimpse of the heavenly life. "He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes." Earth's comfort is very sweet when it is accepted

and allowed to enter the heart, but the best comfort here is only partial, and is always incomplete. The sorrow remains even if we acquiesce most submissively in it. The friend comes not again, nor can we hope that he will come to-morrow, or next week, and the best we can do is to consent to give him up and to go on without him. Comfort does not take away the loneliness. We can never get quite used to doing without him, though we know he is with God. The sweetest friendships are shadowed, too, all along their days of gladness, by the knowledge that there must be a separation, by and by, and one of us must go on alone after that.

“A little way to walk with you, my own —
Only a little way ;
Then one of us must weep and walk alone
Until God’s day.”

Earth’s comfort, precious as it is, is not complete. It is only for a little while, and then another sorrow will come. But in heaven God will wipe away every tear. This means also that there will never be any other tears. For one thing, there will be no sorrow in heaven. “Death shall be no more.” When we join hands with our loved ones there, we shall have no dread of ever being separated from them any more. The reunion with friends will

wipe away the tears which separation from them caused. It will be a blessed moment when those who have been long apart, one here, one there, meet again. The gladness of the reunion will make them forget all the long years of separation. Their new fellowship will yield such joy, such bliss, such fulness of love, that the memory of the long loneliness and sorrow will be swallowed up.

But that is not all. On earth, the best friendships are marred oftentimes by faults, by infirmities, by imperfections in the life, and by rash words and unkindnesses. Not always are even our truest friends thoughtful; not always are they gentle. Somehow many of us go trampling with great iron-soled boots right through the gardens of tender hearts, treading down the delicate plants and flowers. We do not mean to grieve each other; we think we are exceptionally kind. Yet, ignorantly and unintentionally we do things or we speak words which hurt and give pain.

On the other hand, some of us are very sensitive and far too easily hurt by others. We misconstrue into rudeness words and acts which were intended only to be playful. We misunderstand what our friends say or do, imputing a wrong motive when only love was meant. Thus it is that many friend-

ships never reach their best possibilities in this world. It takes time, too, for most of us to grow to the best in our friendships. Love is a lesson to be learned. It is a long lesson, too, and it takes a great while to learn it. At the best here, in the whole of our life, however long, we just begin to understand how to love. But in heaven we shall come together, having learned the lesson perfectly, and shall find and realize friendship's richest possibilities. There are tears oftentimes in earth's truest, purest friendships, but when we meet in heaven, God will wipe away every tear. We shall never hurt nor grieve each other there.

Another way in which God will wipe away tears in heaven will be by revealing to us the blessings that come out of sorrow. Some one has been photographing a dried tear, as it appears under the microscope, and describes the exquisitely beautiful forms — ferns, crosses, dainty frost-work — that are hidden in it. Earth's tears are full of blessings for those who shed them, trusting in Christ and submitting to him. One of the most remarkable and suggestive visions St. John saw in heaven was of a great company that no man could number, gathered out of all nations, wearing white robes, with palms in their hands, singing a song of victory. "Who

are these?" it was asked. The guide explained that these had come out of great tribulation. "Therefore are they before the throne of God; and they serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them."

That is, these bright ones, with the white robes and the palm branches, had not come as one might think from earth's sheltered places, where they had never known a pain or a care, where they had experienced only the sweetness of joy. They had come, rather, out of earth's great tribulations. Yet the hardness of their earthly experiences had not hurt them, had not dimmed the luster of their lives; rather they had grown in beauty and their lives had become more and more radiant in the trials through which they had passed. The brightest glories of heaven are for those who have suffered most in this world.

Dr. W. L. Watkinson tells of a flower-show in London, where all the flowers exhibited had been grown in the city. He says, "It is not much to grow splendid flowers in privileged places,—in places where there is pure air, sweet light, silver dew; but think of growing palms and myrtles, roses and orchids, in dingy courts, in murky cellars, in

mean back yards, on narrow window-sills, on the tiles, among chimney-pots, — think of growing prize blossoms in yellow fogs, stifling air, and amid the breath of the million. No wonder the Queen went to see this exhibition; it was one of the most pathetic of shows, a splendid triumph over dark and hard conditions.” So in St. John’s vision these noble saints, shining in white garments and bearing the symbols of battle and victory, had come, not out of ease and kindly circumstances, not out of experiences of luxury, from cosy homes, from favored spots and genial conditions; rather they had won their nobleness in hard lots, in fierce struggle, in sharp temptation, in bitter sorrow, in keen suffering.

Some of us grow impatient of our difficulties and hardships. We brood over them and come to think that we have not been fairly dealt with. Some of us resent our trials and think that God has not been kind, has not even been just with us. “I submit to you,” wrote a young man the other day, “whether I have had a fair chance in life, whether God’s dealing with me has been quite right and just.” Then he told of certain trials and losses, certain bereavements and sorrows, certain disappointments and struggles which he had met, and then of certain wrongs and

injustices he had suffered from those who ought to have been his friends. The story was one that drew out sympathy. But in the light of this heavenly vision all that had seemed so hard meant an opportunity for this young man to grow into manly strength and heroic character. Those who have the battles and the trials, and overcome in them, shall wear white robes and carry palm branches. They shall be among the victors at the last. Nothing noble is attained easily. The crowns of life can be won only on the fields of struggle.

Thus God wipes away tears in heaven by disclosing the rewards of sorrow, its outcome in nobler, purer, whiter life. "He shall wipe away every tear."

Take another glimpse of heaven. "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." That means satisfying, the quenching of life's thirsts. In a sense our thirsts are satisfied when we receive Christ. We are invited to come to him and drink. One of the Beatitudes is for the unsatisfied. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." So thirst is a blessed experience. The man who has ceased to thirst

has ceased to live and ceased to grow. To be satisfied is to have reached one's limit of growth, for after that there is no longer any desire for more of life and blessing. Christian life in this world is full of thirsts, full of longings. It never reaches its best possibilities. However much of knowledge we have gained, if we are really living, we are ever eager to know more. The philosopher, after his lifetime of study and research, spoke of himself as but like a child, picking up a few bright pebbles on the shore, while the great deep sea still lay before him, unexplored. The thirst for knowledge is never satisfied.

Nor is the thirst for love. Earthly love is very sweet. When it is ideal, it seems to leave nothing to be desired. But pure and deep as it is, there still are thirsts in the heart after we have experienced human love's richest and best. Even divine grace does not altogether in this life quench the soul's thirsts, nor satisfy its longings. We still have our cravings for more and more. We may drink at the fountain to-day, and go away rejoicing in the love of Christ, but to-morrow we shall thirst again. The more we know of Christ, the more we long to know of him. The fuller and sweeter our fellowship with him is, the more do we desire still

fuller and sweeter communion. The more we take of Christ's life into our souls, the more do we desire to be filled with that life. From "some of self, and some of thee," the longing grows until it is, "Less of self, and more of thee." Still the yearning increases, as God's love fills the heart, and at last it is, "None of self, and all of thee."

The writer of the old Psalm said he never would be satisfied in this world, but would be when he looked upon the face of God.

"As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake with beholding thy form." What the Psalmist knew about the after-life we cannot certainly tell. The Old Testament believers did not have the clear and full revealing of immortality that was made in the New Testament. Yet in some way, dim perhaps, as when one sees in a mirror darkly, he believed that one day he would look upon the face of God, and that then all his thirsts would be satisfied. We may say the same—some day we shall be satisfied. Every longing will be answered. We shall be filled with love, with joy, with peace. But it will not be in this world. When we see Christ face to face, and enter into the fulness of his joy, we shall be satisfied.

“Not here ! Not here ! Not where the sparkling waters
Fade into mocking sands as we draw near ;
Where, in the wilderness, each footstep falters —
I shall be satisfied, but oh, not here !

“There is a land where every feeble pulse is thrilling
With raptures earth’s sojourners may not know ;
Where heaven’s repose each weary heart is stilling,
And peacefully life’s time-tossed currents flow.

“Not here, where every dream of bliss deceives us,
Where the worn spirit never gains its goal ;
Where, haunted ever by the thoughts that grieve us,
Across us floods of bitter memories roll.

“Far out of sight, while yet the flesh enfolds us,
Lies that fair country where our hearts abide ;
And of its bliss is nought more wondrous told us
Than these four words, ‘ I shall be satisfied.’

“Satisfied ? Satisfied ? The spirit’s yearning
For sweet companionship of kindred minds, —
The silent love that here meets no returning,
The inspiration which no language finds, —

“Shall they be satisfied ? The soul’s vague longing,
The aching mind which nothing earthly fills ?
Oh, what desires upon my soul are thronging,
As I look upward to the heavenly hills !

“Thither my weak and weary feet are tending.
Saviour and Lord, with thy frail child abide !
Guide me toward home, where, all my wanderings ending,
I shall see thee and be satisfied.”

So heaven is to be a place of satisfaction. No
need will be unsupplied. No want will be unmet.

No craving will be unanswered. No thirst will be unfulfilled. The voice calls, "He that is athirst, let him come; he that will, let him take the water of life freely."

We do not begin to realize what this assurance of the heavenly life means. Satisfaction! Oh, it is a hungry word. It has gone through the ages finding no answer to its cry. There are many good people to whom this world has not ministered lavishly, has indeed ministered most scantily. There are some who have been bitterly disappointed in human love. They thought that they were getting bread, and it was only a stone. For promised tenderness and cherishing, they have had only neglect and wrong. Instead of plentiful providing, they have had want, perhaps sometimes hunger. Instead of kindness, they have had only cruelty. How these will enjoy heaven's satisfaction of loving! What heaven will mean to thousands who have had so little of human love here!

There are those to whom all life has been only a disappointment, a failure, an alluring mirage fading into desert sands. They have gone through the world with empty hands. They have known little of joy or of comfort. An old woman, who



had experienced only want all her life, at the very best, bareness and scarcity, was taken by some fresh-air society to spend a day beside the sea. Her first exclamation, when she looked upon the ocean was, "I am glad that here is something there is enough of for everybody!" It seemed to her the first time she had ever seen anything there was enough of. Think what heaven will mean to earth's hungry ones with its bread enough and to spare! "I shall be satisfied with beholding thy form."

Take one other glimpse. As we read the wonderful description of the heavenly life in the last chapters of the New Testament, we find that all the glory comes from Christ. "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end." "I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof." "The city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine upon it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamp thereof is the Lamb."

Whatever else heaven may mean to us, it will, first of all, mean being with Christ. Here we see him only by faith, oftentimes dimly. Every day some one speaks of the difficulty of realizing the presence of Christ in this earthly life. We long

to see him. Our hearts hunger for him. "We would see Jesus," is our cry all the days. And the answer to our cry seems only an echo of our longing. As Tennyson puts it, man in this world is

"An infant crying in the night,
An infant crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry."

But when the veil of sense that hides heaven from our sight is rent for us, some midnight or some noonday, and the blessedness is suddenly revealed, we shall see, first of all, before we look upon any of the splendors of the place, Him we have loved though seeing him not, — our Saviour and our Friend, Jesus Christ. And he will wipe away every tear from our eyes. Being with him, we shall need nothing else to make our blessedness complete. Seeing him we shall be satisfied. Seeing him, we shall be like him, changed fully into his image. Seeing him, we shall then be with him forever.

These are only a few of the glimpses of the heavenly life which the Scriptures give us, and even these are only glimpses, as when the window opens for a moment upon the glory and then quickly closes again. Indeed no earthly language

is adequate to describe the blessedness, the joy, the happiness of heaven.

Perhaps no human word gathers and holds in itself so much of the truest meaning of heaven as the word home. Home is a place of love. It is a place of confidence. No one doubts another at home. We have nothing to hide or conceal from each other inside home's doors. We know we are loved. Home is the one place where we are never afraid of being misunderstood. Our faults may be seen and known, but we are dear in spite of them. We find there sympathy with our sufferings, patience with our infirmities and shortcomings. Heaven is home. Into it, all the children will be gathered. It is a place of glory, of beauty, of splendor, a holy place, but, best of all, it is a place of perfect love.

The human element has a large place in heaven's dearness to our hearts. Before we have loved ones there we are likely to be impressed most by the majesty and grandeur in the descriptions. One writes, "As a child I thought of heaven as glorious, as the place of the divine presence, as full of bright angels, with never ending worship, but terrible in its majesty. I was not attracted to it, — indeed I dreaded to think of entering heaven.

There was no one there I knew, and I would feel strange, lonesome; nobody would know me or welcome me. Then my little sister died, and at once there was a new element in heaven. There was one person there I knew and loved, one who would greet me when I entered the gates. Since that many loved ones have passed into heaven, and now I think of it no longer as cold, stately, and lonely, but as warm with love, full of human interest, a true home."

Heaven is the place where our lives will find their completion. It is the glorious end that waits before us, where all our hopes shall have their fulfilment, all our dreams their realization. Much of our life in this world is only beginnings. We mean to do beautiful things, but when they are finished the beauty is lacking. Our worthy intentions lie as faded flowers at our feet. We tried sincerely and earnestly, and failed. We struggled hard, but were not overcomers. In heaven, however, we shall find waiting for us, not the poor attainments, the broken purposes, the sad failures that we wept over on earth, but the things we sincerely tried to do,— in finished beauty now, for God takes our intentions, the things we meant to do, the things we tried to be, makes them real



in heaven, and fills them out in perfectness. Of a noble woman one wrote:—

“The good she tried to do shall stand as if ’twere done ;
God finishes the work by noble souls begun.”

There ought to be immeasurable inspiration in the fact of heaven as the culmination and completion of life. The hope of it should make us strong to overcome all discouragement. No matter how hard the way here is, the end is glorious. No matter the fierceness of the battle, the weariness of the struggle, the bitterness of the sorrow, the keenness of the suffering, — this is the final outcome.

We are now and here children of God. That should be glory enough to cheer and inspire us for most courageous service. But in this life the best is veiled. It is not yet made manifest what we shall be when we reach the goal of our life. This dull bud will open, and a glorious rose will unfold in all its splendor. From this poor, feeble, struggling earthly life will emerge at length a child of God in glorious beauty. If only we could have a glimpse of ourselves, — what we will be ten minutes after our friends say we are dead, what we will be when we are absent from the body and are at home with the Lord, could we go on living as if we were made only for the earth? Let us

not grovel any longer. Let us not creep in the slime and dust, we who have this glorious future. We are "but a little lower than God" — let us live to be worthy of our exalted honor. We have not yet reached the best. When we see Christ, we shall be made like him.

We should remember that the road to the heavenly life starts in this world; that only those who have heaven in their hearts here, can be admitted into heaven at the last. We must receive the beginning of the heavenly purity, the heavenly joy, the heavenly peace, into our lives in this world. In the Apostles' Creed we say, "I believe in the life everlasting." We must practise our belief. Heaven must be real to our faith. It is real, more real than earth. It is a place. Our friends are there, living, loving, remembering us still, busy in the service of Christ. Let us make heaven real to ourselves — as real as our houses, the homes to which we go when we come back from a journey. Let us practise the heavenly life to-morrow and next day, at home, in business, on the street. Let us be the kind of people we would be if we were in heaven.

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