

Glimpses of Heaven!
Meditations on the Book of Revelation
by
Maria Sandberg, 1880

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Preface

Another edition of this little book of “Glimpses of Heaven!” has been called for. It has already passed through several editions; and, having been blessed by God to many, especially among the sick and sorrowful, it is again sent forth to speak silently to the *troubled heart* of what is revealed to us of the things that are unseen and eternal in the Book of the Revelation.

In the midst of much that is difficult to be understood — prophetic of things past and to come — the veil is sometimes lifted up, and the humble believer looks in and catches a glimpse of the glory which Jesus wills that he shall share.

In these *meditations on heavenly bliss*, we should try as much as we can to render them profitable for our sanctification and growth in grace. They should be seasons of great searchings of heart, when our souls are, as it were, *gazing upon the realities of eternity*, in the sight of the heart-searching God, with all their inmost recesses laid bare before Him. Then would they exercise a *sanctifying* influence over us. We would be often restrained from what is unworthy of our heavenly hopes, by the thought of the glimpse of Heaven which has left its sweet, yet solemn remembrance. We should say, “How shall we be able to appear before our God prepared, as it were, to sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb — if we indulge this worldly temper or passion? How shall we be able to rejoice in the hope of seeing our blessed Savior — if we have thus dishonored His name, or if we have thus neglected to promote His cause? How shall we meet our Lord with joy, if we thus forget Him now?”

That these meditations may help the sad and tried believer to “recover their strength” on their way to their eternal home above, is the earnest prayer of the author.

Revelation 1:3

“Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near!”

It has been said that this is the only book in the Bible to the reading of which an especial blessing is promised. Let us, then, while we meditate upon it, expect this special blessing from a faithful, promise-keeping God. Let us expect that these *glimpses of Heaven* will render us more heavenly in our affections and desires — more heavenly in our lives and thoughts. What is it we are about to meditate upon, and what glimpse is about to be displayed to our mind’s eye? It is to read and hear of *Heaven* that we are invited. It is to see by faith the glories of the new Jerusalem, through reading and hearing the words of this prophecy, that we are encouraged. And can we do so without deriving benefit? Surely not.

The natural effect of looking at things which are unseen and eternal, must be to cast a shadow over things that are seen and temporal. What comparison can that which is to last but for a short time, have with that which is to last forever! But, more than this, if the thing set before us is beautiful in itself, valuable to us, worthy of our choice, and to be our own, and our own forever — must it not be most worthy of our regard and attention now? Must it not lead to a depreciation of everything else in comparison with it?

This is the subject on which we are encouraged to meditate. It is a subject in which we have a deep personal interest. *Inheritors of the kingdom of Heaven!* Shall we not read with eagerness the *description* of our inheritance? Shall we not rejoice in our *privilege* and *prospects*, and look with longing eyes and glowing hearts towards the opening light which gives us, in the blessed book of the Revelation, even a glimpse of our glorious destiny — our own, our purchased possession? Bought with the blood of Christ, what though we possess not lands and dwelling-places on earth — shall we complain while we know that we have “a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens!”

Let us expect to receive an increase of hope, and joy, contentment, heavenly mindedness, and indifference to worldly possessions — from the glimpses of Heaven graciously given to us in the words of this prophecy.

“Come, Jesus, Heavenly Teacher, come,
Convey your own instructions home.”

“Whenever I read or hear your Word,
Your inward teachings, Lord, afford;
To me your holy will reveal,
Unfold the Book, and loose the seal!
“Call me, oh, call me to your feet,
And there transported may I sit:
With joy your heavenly features trace,
And feast upon your richest grace!”

Revelation 1:5-6

“Unto Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father — to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever! Amen.”

“Ah, Lord, enlarge our scanty thought,
To know the wonders You have wrought!
Unloose our stammering tongues to tell
Your love immense, unsearchable!”

No human love can be compared with the love of Christ. His is a love which surpasses knowledge. Therefore, when the apostle prayed for the Ephesian converts, that they might know the love of Christ, he added, “which surpasses knowledge;” that is, they could only know a *little* of that wondrous subject — a *drop*, as it were, from the boundless ocean! And we can only stand on the shore of the same ocean, and exclaim — Unto Him that loved us — so loved us that He washed us from our sins in His own blood!

Have we learned anything of the evil of sin? Do we feel its intolerable burden? Like *Christian* in “*Pilgrim’s Progress*,” do we groan being burdened with our load? Then shall we, in some little measure, appreciate that love which

has washed us from our sins in His own blood, and which has purchased for us everlasting deliverance from the burden of sin. Oh! it is when we look at the cross of Christ, by faith — that sin loses its power to tempt, to terrify and to distress.

“Sweet the moments, rich in blessing,
Which before the cross I spend.”

And, oh! let us think of the happy time when we shall be free from sin, and when we shall see our Deliverer; when we shall see Him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood!

And while we are looking for, and hastening unto, that glorious time, let us also rejoice in *our present privileges* — namely, the assurance of the love of Jesus, the assurance that our sins are washed away in His blood, and that Jesus has made us now kings and priests unto God and His Father! *Kings*, conquering sin and Satan by the grace of God; and *priests*, being permitted, through the blood of Jesus, to offer up the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise. Priests unto God, holding communion with Him, admitted into the holy of holies, into the presence chamber of the Almighty, not at stated seasons, but at all times and in all places!

Oh! what *blessings*, present and prospective, has the *blood* of Jesus, and the *love* of Jesus, procured for His believing people! Surely we shall join with the beloved disciple in saying, “Unto Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father — to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever! Amen.”

“Oh, Love divine, how sweet You art!
When shall I find my willing heart
All taken up by Thee?
I thirst, and faint, and die, to prove
The greatness of redeeming love,
The love of Christ to me!

Stronger His love than death or Hell,
Its riches are unsearchable.
The first-born sons of light
Desire in vain its depths to see,
They cannot reach the mystery,
The length, the breadth, the height!”

Revelation 1:7

“Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him!”

Who is it that will come one day, and *whom* every eye shall see? The Lord Jesus, the Savior of sinners, the Judge of all men! Every eye shall see Him! My eye shall see Him too. Will it be with *fear* and terror — that I shall behold the King of kings coming to judgment? Or will my gaze be that of admiration and love for my adorable Redeemer?

In order to answer this question, let me ask myself another, “Am I now *preparing* for His coming — preparing to see Jesus Christ? Do I do everything in reference to the day of His appearing? Have I looked to Him now with the *eye of faith*? Am I continually looking unto Him as I run the race set before me? Is it my greatest joy now to realize the Savior’s presence and favor?”

Then may I also *rejoice* in the expectation of His second coming, when faith shall be turned to sight. How can I *fear* the realization of my fondest hopes, the accomplishment of my best desires? The more we look to Jesus *now*, by faith — the less shall we fear death and judgment. For how, indeed, can we fear to meet our best and dearest Friend?

Let us often consider, also, how any feeling or pursuit will bear this touchstone: Will it be remembered with joy at the coming of Christ? As one who expects the Savior’s appearing, can I indulge in *this* pursuit? As one who loves that appearing, can I indulge in this feeling? Paul assures us that there is a crown which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give at His coming — to all who love His appearing. Let us not shrink, then, from meditation on the glorious coming of Christ, whether by death or judgment, but rather look for and expect it as the end of all our sins, sufferings and trials — and the beginning of perfect and eternal happiness!

Let us ask ourselves, “Are we willing this very night to leave all on earth, and go to Jesus?” The question is a startling one; and, on first hearing it, some of us would say, “Oh, spare me a little, before I go hence, and be no more seen.” But if we are true Christians, this arises from the weakness of our faith; for could we really see Jesus standing at the right hand

of God, and saying to us this very night, “Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world,” I am quite sure that nothing on earth could detain us!

“Our souls would leave this heavy clay,
At that transporting word;
Run up with joy the shining way,
To see and praise the Lord.
Fearless of Hell and ghastly death,
We’d break through every foe;
The wings of love and arms of faith
Would bear us safely through!”

Revelation 1:8

“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,” says the Lord, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty!”

“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end,” says the Lord, the first and the last, the Creator of all things; for whom all things were made, and by whom all things are held together, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty I AM! Can this be the meek and lowly Jesus, the rejected and disregarded Savior, the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief? Yes, for although for our sakes once He was the suffering Savior, now He says, “I *am* the Alpha and Omega.”

Oh, meditate on what your Savior is now; look away for a little moment from the *suffering* Jesus (though sweet indeed it is to realize His sympathy and His dying love) — still look away from that to His present *exaltation*. Forget for a little while what He *was* on earth, and think of what He is *now* — the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the Author and Finisher of your faith. The work He has *begun* for you, He will *finish*; it shall not be left undone, for He is the Almighty. What is there He cannot accomplish for you? What is there He cannot do for His people?

Oh, that you could in heart and mind, with that Almighty One continually dwell! Then would you realize the great and mighty things He would do for you even now, and the still more wonderful things He will do for you through all eternity. For will it not require an Almighty arm to bring you through all the trials and temptations of this life to Heaven? Will it not require an Almighty arm to enable you to overcome sin, and to gain the victory over Satan, death, and the grave? There is help laid on One that is mighty, and you may hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Oh, despair no longer, but as you go on your way looking unto Jesus, rejoice evermore in His strength, His power, His almightiness. All things are yours, if you are Christ’s. He is your Alpha and Omega, your beginning and ending, who is, and who was, and who is to come — your Almighty One. How will you realize all this, when you find yourself indeed safely landed in glory, “past all fear forever,” having entered into rest, and received the end of your faith, even the salvation of your soul!

“This God is the God we adore,
Our faithful unchangeable friend;
Whose love is as great as His power,
And neither knows measure nor end.
“Tis Jesus, the First and the Last,
Whose Spirit shall guide us safe home
We’ll praise Him for all that is past,
And trust Him for all that’s to come!”

Revelation 1:9

“I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus!”

The beloved disciple who is now in glory, having obtained the *fruition* of all the glorious things of which he had but *glimpses* here below — was once a brother pilgrim with ourselves, a companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patient endurance of Jesus Christ. Though now one of the Church *triumphant* above — He was once a member of the Church *militant*, as we ourselves are now. Very cheering and profitable is it to remember this for our encouragement.

Do we hope one day to be a companion of the saints in light? Of the zealous Paul, the warm-hearted Peter, the affectionate and saint-like John? Are we then *now* companions of the saints in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patient endurance of Jesus Christ? We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of Heaven. No *new* way can be made for us. We must suffer and fight, if we would reign. We must run with patience the race set before us. We must belong to the kingdom of Heaven here — if we would be inheritors of the kingdom of glory hereafter.

John was called to suffer banishment from his country to the lonely island of Patmos. His affectionate disposition no doubt felt keenly the loneliness and separation from kindred spirits consequent on this exile; yet there in his solitude, the Lord Jesus manifested Himself in a most wonderful manner to His beloved disciple; there He revealed to him all the words of this prophecy, and gave him visions of the glory that awaited him. And thus will it be with us. The Lord will not call us to solitude and suffering, without making up abundantly, by His own presence, the loss of creature comforts. Our Patmos will be, like that of John, cheered with glimpses of Heaven, and with revelations of the Savior's love.

Shrink not then from the coming trial, fear not the desolating stroke; look to the blessed end of all these afflictions — the everlasting happiness of the redeemed in glory. Oh, dread not to be a brother of the disciples of Christ, a companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patient endurance of Jesus Christ; but rejoice inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy!

“Give me the wings of faith to rise
Within the veil, and see
The saints above, how great their joys,
How bright their glories be!
“Once they were mourners here below,
And wet their couch with tears,
They wrestled hard, as we do now,
With sins, and doubts, and fears.
“I ask them whence their victory came;
They, with united breath,
Ascribe their conquest to the Lamb,
Their triumph to His death.
“They marked the footsteps that He trod,
His zeal inspired their breast;
And following their Incarnate God,
Possess the promised rest!
“Our glorious Leader claims our praise,
For His own pattern given;
And the long cloud of witnesses
Show the same path to Heaven!”

Revelation 1:10

“I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day!”

At the close of the Lord's-day, let us examine ourselves by this text; “Have we been in the Spirit today?” It is the Lord's Day, a day set apart and devoted to the Lord; have we kept it as such? What humbling views of ourselves have we obtained? What elevating views of Christ? What new sense of the vanity and emptiness of things below, and of the excellence and value of things above? If we have spent the day in the holy duties of prayer, reading the Scriptures, attending the public means of grace — and especially if we have given some part of it to self-examination, such will be the result. We shall find our repentance for sin deepened, our faith in Jesus increased, our love to God quickened, our hope of glory brightened, and our souls strengthened for further service.

Another Lord's Day has nearly passed. Will the light and comfort received today, shed a sanctifying and strengthening influence over the ensuing week? Shall we bear away from it such a glimpse of Heaven as will deaden our

love of the world, hallow our fellowship with our fellow-creatures, quicken us on our way, urge us to good works, and excite us to endeavors to bring others to be our joy and crown of rejoicing in the day of Christ?

Oh! it was for such purposes as these that the blessed Lord's Day was given to us. It was not that we should spend it in ease and indolence — but in holy diligence, and in earnest prayer, in humble contrition for the past, in resolutions for the future, (formed in dependence on Divine grace,) and in meditation on the eternal and unseen world.

In the use of the means, the Holy Spirit, that Divine teacher, guide, and comforter — will be found to descend plenteously upon his people, and greatly to enrich them with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus.

“May I, throughout this day of Thine,
Be in Your Spirit, Lord;
Spirit of humble fear divine,
That trembles at Your Word.

“Spirit of faith, my heart to raise,
And fix on things above;
Spirit of sacrifice and praise,
Of holiness and love.”

“Nearer, my God, to Thee —
Nearer to Thee!
E'en though it be a cross
That raises me;
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to Thee —
Nearer to Thee.

“Though, like a wanderer,
The sun gone down,
Darkness comes over me,
My rest a stone;
Yet in my dreams I'd be
Nearer, my God, to Thee —
Nearer to Thee.

“There let my way appear
Steps unto Heaven;
All that You send me
In mercy given,
Angels to beckon me
Nearer, my God, to Thee —
Nearer to Thee.

“And when, on joyful wing,
Cleaving the sky;
Sun, moon, and stars forgot,
Upward I fly;
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to Thee —
Nearer to Thee.”

Revelation 1:12-17

I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone “like a son of man,” dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden

sash around his chest. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. *When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.* Then he placed his right hand on me and said: Do not be afraid! I am the First and the Last!”

We are told, in the last verse of this chapter, that the *lampstands* which the apostle saw, are the *seven Churches* which then existed in Asia. In the midst of those Churches he saw one like unto the Son of man; a glorious form, the description of which he gives, and which he knew to be the Son of man, his own glorified Master and Head. At sight of this glorified body of his Lord, the disciple fell down as dead; but Jesus laid His right hand upon him, and said, “Do not be afraid!”

Let us meditate on this beautiful revelation of our Savior’s divinity and humanity, of His majesty and tenderness, of His greatness and condescension, of His power and love — remembering what we read in a former verse, that the disciple to whom it was revealed was then a brother, and companion in tribulation, for he was still in the flesh.

And Jesus is still the same; the same wonderful God-man and Savior, who still walks in the midst of His Church, revealing Himself to His faithful people as their mighty Alpha and Omega, their omniscient, omnipresent God — yet their tender sympathizing friend, saying unto the feeblest of them — Do not be afraid! I am able to save you; none shall pluck you out of my hand! I, who have been the Author, will be the Finisher of your faith; commit the keeping of your soul to me. I lay down my life for *my sheep*, and you shall never perish. I will hold you by my right hand; therefore fear not. It is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom — Do not be afraid!

“I love to hear that voice of old,
Which, over Patmos’ rocky shore,
Thus sweetly spoke — ‘I live, behold!
I am alive for evermore!’
‘My Savior lives!’ — no mortal ears
Can listen to more joyous strains;
High above yonder rolling spheres
My God, and yet my brother, reigns!
‘My Savior lives!’ He *intercedes*
Still as the Lamb, the crucified.
‘Father, I will,’ tis thus He pleads;
Ne’er was the blessing He asked denied.
‘My Savior lives!’ and still His heart
Responsive beats upon the throne,
To every pang from which I smart;
He makes my tears and woes His own!
‘My Savior lives!’ If thus so near,
Ne’er at His will shall I repine;
His presence dries each falling tear,
Proclaims all *needful* discipline.
‘My Savior lives!’ and soon again
He’ll come to take His pilgrims home.
To feel no longer aching pain,
And from Himself no more to roam!
‘My Savior lives!’ to see His face
My endless happiness will be.
Lord, independent of all place,
Wherever You are is Heaven to me!”

Revelation 1:12-18

“I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades!”

We all know what it is to fear death, and many suffer much from this cause. But let us meditate on this assurance of our Savior, and see if faith in these blessed words will not chase away some portion, at least, of that *fear of death* which is so natural to man.

Jesus your Savior has the keys of Hades, that is, of the unseen world, or of the grave. Oh! believer, you have trusted your Savior often, and will you not trust Him yet again? You have trusted in Him, and not feared coming trials — and will you not trust in Him for dying grace and strength? He lives, and was dead, and He is alive for evermore. He died to take away sin — the sting of death. He lives, yes, He is alive for evermore, to be with His people in their last hour, and to give them the victory over their *last enemy*, death. How often does He give a visible triumph to His servants in a dying hour! Fears are taken away, joy abounds, Jesus is present to conduct them over the flood. Fear not, then, O timid soul; be anxious for nothing; as your day — your strength shall be.

“Shudder not to pass the stream,
Venture all your care on Him;
Him whose dying love and power
Stilled its tossing, hushed its roar.
Safe as the expanded wave,
Gentle as the summer’s eve,
Not one object of His care
Ever suffered shipwreck there!”

Jesus is alive for evermore. With this assurance, answer every unbelieving doubt with which Satan would harass and distress you. Jesus, your Savior, has the keys of death and the grave. Trust in Him who lives, and was dead, and is alive for evermore. Believe that He will fulfill His promise, and you shall not be disappointed. “Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

“The Lord lives! Blessed be my Rock; and praised be the God of my salvation!”
“Our Savior, Advocate, and Friend,
On You our lives and souls depend;
The keys of death, and worlds unseen,
Firm in Your hands have ever been.
Your pierced hands our feet shall lead,
Safe in Your steps through death’s dark shade.”

Revelation 2:2-3

“I *know* your works, your labor, your patient endurance. You have persevered and have endured hardships, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary!”

It is a great consolation to the Christian to know that his Savior is omniscient; that He knows everything concerning him, his every thought, his every desire, his every motive. For, although he is conscious of much imperfection and sin, he is conscious also of the sincerity of his desire after holiness and for the glory of God. And his Savior knows this too. He can appeal to that Omniscient One, whose eyes are as a flame of fire; and can say, “Lord, You know all things! You know that I love You!” And he hears the sweet response, “I *know* your works, your labor, your patient endurance. You have persevered and have endured hardships, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary!”

Jesus knows what others do not. He knows the difficulties you have to encounter, both from within and from without. He knows all the temptations you have to suffer. He knows the amount of labor and patient endurance those things cost — which others, perhaps, account it easy for you to undertake and go through with. Oh! let this encourage you on your way to the kingdom of glory — Jesus knows all your trials along the way!

Great stress is here laid upon the patient endurance of the saints. Christ especially notices their patient labor, their continuance in well-doing, their going on from year to year in their labor of love, for His name’s sake. He knows, too, that it is not their own glory which they are seeking, but His. He says, “I know that you have labored for My name’s sake!” It is but too true that self-seeking mingles with this desire for the glory of Christ — but self-seeking is not the motive of action with the Christian. Do you fear that it is in your case? Oh! humble and tempted believer, try yourself, then, by this test, “If no glory should accrue to Jesus from this or that work, would I go on with it? Would I thus labor only for my own

glory? Would I patiently continue the course in which I am now if Jesus knew it not?" Oh, no! It is not your own glory, but Christ's, you are seeking, however imperfectly, however weakly.

Jesus knows that you have not become weary, that you have persevered, that you are persevering, and that you will persevere unto the end. From His throne in glory, where He has provided a place for you to sit with Him, He says, "I *know* your works, your labor, your patient endurance. You have persevered and have endured hardships, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary!"

Revelation 2:4

"Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love."

Notwithstanding the comfort we may take from the glimpse we had of our glorified Savior's omniscience in our last meditation; in that He knows the sincerity of His people's motives, the greatness of their temptations, and the extent of their patient endurance and labor for His name's sake; yet we must not stop short of the other part of His address to His people, namely, that He knows also their backslidings, their wanderings, their faithlessness to Him who has done so much for them.

"Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love." The Lord says, "I remember you, the kindness of your youth, the love of your espousals. I remember how zealous you once were for my glory, how fervent were your prayers, how strong and ardent your affection for me. Once you would not have omitted speaking of me to others; once you would not have been content with such short and formal prayers; once you would not have listened so carelessly to my Gospel; once you meditated with joy unspeakable on the *heavenly home* to which I am bringing you.

But, "Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love." Now your thoughts of Heaven are few and cold. Instead of exclaiming, "Oh! what has Jesus bought for me!" etc. you are looking back with regret to the years of your life that have past away, and are fearful lest you should be called too soon from this wilderness world, to your happy heavenly home.

Examine yourselves, prove your own selves, watch the first signs of spiritual declension; fear nothing so much as wanderings of heart from Jesus, growing cold towards Him, and fixing your affections too much on the creature. Once you loved Him only, loved Him supremely. Now He has increased you on every side, given you a heritage among His people — Christian friends, beloved children, a place in His vineyard. Oh! see that you love these *gifts* in Him, and for His sake! Let the language of your heart be —

"I would not lie down upon roses below,
I ask not a portion, I seek not a rest,
Until I find them forever on Jesus' breast."

Often ask yourselves, "Is this the amount of love I shall be satisfied with when I see Him who has loved me and given Himself for me? When my faith shall be turned to sight — shall I love thus coldly?"

Endeavor to realize the presence of Jesus now — that will rekindle your fainting love. Endeavor to realize the love of Jesus to your souls — and that will revive your languid affection. Look back on the affection for Jesus which you once experienced, remember from whence you are fallen, and repent and do the first works.

"Oh, for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heavenly frame,
A light to shine upon the road
That leads me to the Lamb!
"Where is the blessedness I knew,
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus and His Word?
"What peaceful hours I once enjoyed,
How sweet their memory still!
But they have left an aching void
The world can never fill.
"Return, O Holy Dove, return,
Sweet messenger of rest;

I hate the sins which made You mourn,
And drove You from my breast!
“The dearest idol I have known,
Whatever that idol be,
Help me to tear it from Thy throne,
And worship only Thee!
“So shall my walk be close with God,
Calm and serene my frame;
So purer light shall mark the road
That leads me to the Lamb.”

Revelation 2:7

“To him who *overcomes* I will give to eat from *the tree of life*, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God!”

These words contain a *promise of eternal life*. When our Savior was on earth He said to His disciples, “I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish!” “Whoever lives and believes in me shall never die!” And now that He who was dead is alive for evermore, He repeats the same gracious promise, “To him who *overcomes* I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God!”

If our first parents had not sinned they would have eaten of the *tree of life* and lived forever, “He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from *the tree of life* and eat, and live forever!” Genesis 3:22.

We may justly infer that this promise, that our Savior will give His people to eat of the tree of life in Heaven, signifies that He will maintain their life forever and ever! When once we enter the presence of our Savior — we shall go no more out forever. Jesus Himself will give us to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

How much comfort do Christians lose by neglecting to read the book of the *Revelation of Jesus Christ*! Many who constantly treasure up the words He spoke when on earth — almost overlook these His sayings after His death and resurrection. In these messages to His Churches we may find doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction, warnings and promises, but more especially the latter. How few, if asked the question, Where does your Savior promise you eternal life — would point to these precious words, “To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the tree of life!” Yet it would seem as if the Church militant ought especially to remember the *last words* which were sent down from their glorified Head. It is beautiful also to see how all His words agree; both those which were spoken when He was in this valley of tears, bearing about our human nature with all its infirmities, and those which He spoke from His kingdom of glory above.

“He who *overcomes* will not be hurt at all by the second death.” Revelation 2:11

“To him who *overcomes*, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it!” Revelation 2:17

“He who *overcomes* will be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels.” Revelation 3:5

“Him who *overcomes* I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of Heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name!” Revelation 3:12

“To him who *overcomes*, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne!” Revelation 3:21

“He who *overcomes* will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son!” Revelation 21:7

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever, is our Savior, our all in all, our hope in this world and in the world to come; whom, having not seen, we love; in whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory!

“Here in the body pent,
Absent from Him I roam,
Yet nightly pitch my moving tent
A day’s march nearer home!
“My Father’s house on high!
Home of my soul! how near,
At times, to faith’s far-seeing eye,
Your golden gates appear!

“Ah, then my spirit faints
To reach the land I love,
The bright inheritance of saints,
Jerusalem above!”

Revelation 2:10

“Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. *Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life!*”

Our gracious Savior perhaps intended this as an especial promise to the primitive martyrs, as if He had said, “Be faithful unto the death,” that is, even unto suffering a violent death for my sake, and I will give you a glorious reward, even a crown of everlasting life — in exchange for the sacrifice of a few years of earthly existence.

But though not called upon to suffer martyrdom, we may take the promise to ourselves of a glorious reward, given us immediately after death — a reward of *grace* from Him who died for us. “Be faithful unto the hour of death, and then I, your Savior, will give you a crown of life!”

This, and many other passages, imply the *immediate happiness* of the souls of the redeemed at death. Still, how often is it necessary to remind the true believer that it is not the will of his Savior, that he should find *perfect rest* on earth! This present world is the scene of conflict and trial; now is the time for probation, and discipline, and training for eternity. Yet we need the lesson over and over again, that this world is not our rest.

We try, and try again, to rest in the *creature*, and in the many *gifts* which the Lord has given us — to be our solace on the way to Heaven. Again and again we forget that this world is not our home — and that Heaven is our eternal home. Our faith is tried, our courage fails, despair creeps over us — but our Savior graciously comes with the warning, “Be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life!” Do not look for perfect happiness in this present world. “Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world!” John 16:33.

“This is the victory by which you shall overcome — even your faith.” Look forward to that glorious time when Jesus will give you the crown of life.

And *when* is that time so much to be welcomed and wished for? When is that happy period of freedom from suffering, and of entrance into everlasting rest, and unalloyed happiness? It is the hour of *death*. “Be faithful *unto death*.” The hour of death is no longer to be dreaded and feared, now that Jesus has destroyed him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and has delivered those who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Oh! death, where is your sting? Oh! grave, where is your victory? Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

“When the world my heart is rending
With its heaviest storm of care,
My glad thoughts, to God ascending,
Find a refuge from despair.
“There’s a *hand of mercy* near me,
Though the waves of trouble roar;
There’s an hour of rest to cheer me,
When the toils of life are o’er.
“Happy hour! when saints are gaining
That bright crown they longed to wear;
Not one spot of sin remaining,
Not one pang of earthly care!
“Oh! to rest in peace forever,
Joined with happy souls above;
Where no foe my heart can sever
From the Savior whom I love!
“This the hope that shall sustain me
Until life’s pilgrimage be past;
Fears may vex, and troubles pain me,
I shall reach my home at last!”

Revelation 2:11

“He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death!”

It is indeed calculated to make us watchful and prayerful, when we think of the *doom* from which we hope to escape. The second death! Oh! what is it? It is to die eternally, to die to hope, to die to happiness, to be separated forever from God, to live in perpetual remorse and anguish in that place where the worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched!

Yet, if we overcome through the blood of the Lamb, we shall not be hurt of the second death. The conflict is sharp, the victory most difficult, owing to the evil of our hearts, the deceitfulness of the world, and the wiles and malice of the devil.

But the believer can say, “Thanks be to God, for He has delivered my soul from the nethermost Hell!”

Is this our experience? Have we been taught that, but for redeeming grace, the second death must have been ours? Have we been taught that, but for restraining grace — we should even now fall from the narrow and difficult path to Heaven? Or do we think that we *deserve* eternal happiness, and that Hell can never be our portion?

Even the full assurance of hope, which is given to the advanced believer, does not dim his sense of the danger from which he has been snatched, and of the necessity of constant watchfulness lest he should come short of the promised rest. The way of watchfulness and trembling is the way of safety. But while we work out our salvation with fear and trembling, let us rejoice in the Savior’s assurance, “He who overcomes shall not be hurt of the second death!”

Revelation 3:5

“He who *overcomes* shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels!”

Why does our Savior so often speak in the language of *caution* to His true followers? “Hold that fast which you have, that no man take your crown.” “He who *overcomes*, and keeps my works unto the end.” And here, “I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life.” Is it not because of the *dangers* which beset our path, and because of our liability to grow falsely secure, and thus to become careless and unwatchful? Is it not because *Satan*, as a roaring lion, is ever on the watch for our halting, and sometimes puts on the appearance of an angel of light?

This *hard conflict* is in order to try our faith. And, oh, with what joy shall we at last behold our names written in the Lamb’s Book of Life, and hear them confessed before His Father, and before His angels! The harder the conflict — the greater will be the joy of victory.

Timid Christian! though there is every cause for you to distrust *yourself*, and to fear the power of *Satan* — still there is no reason for your distressing doubts and fears, your distrust of Christ. Hear Him saying, “I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels!” After all your doubts of reaching Heaven, how great will be your joy to find yourself there! Jesus will appear for you, and confess you to be His true and faithful disciple. And if conscience now accuses you of having sometimes denied your Savior — like Peter, saying that you know Him not, if not by word, yet by your conduct; let your heart be melted into compunction for past timidity, no longer deny Christ, confess Him before men, glorify Him here, “being confident of this, that He who *began* a good work in you will *carry it on to completion* until the day of Christ Jesus!” Philippians 1:6

Revelation 3:8-10

“I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial!”

When Jesus opens before us the way to Heaven, and sets us in the narrow way, no man can hinder us. It is an open door, which no man can shut. If we are traveling in that narrow way, in dependence on Jesus, endeavoring to obey His word, however small our strength — Jesus will keep us in the path until we arrive at its blissful termination in glory. The

enemies of your soul shall know that Jesus has loved you; and because you have patiently gone on, Jesus will keep you from being overcome in the hour of temptation. It has been said, "A weak believer, and his strong Savior, can do wonders!" It is when you know your own weakness, that you will find yourself strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.

Is your path to Heaven difficult and dark? The Savior says, "I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial!" Go on trusting, believing, hoping — and all shall be well; you shall be brought safely through every trial and temptation, your eyes shall see the King in His beauty, they shall behold the land that is very far off.

"He'll never quench the smoking flax,
But raise it to a flame;
The bruised reed He'll never break,
Nor scorn the meanest name."

Look at the bright goal you have in view. Look not behind. "Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise. We are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul. Hebrews 10:35-39

Revelation 3:12

"And I will write on him My new name!"

What is this name? The name of *Jesus* written on the believer's heart in all his glorious characters and offices; written on his heart while here below; the pledge of his bearing it written on his forehead to all eternity. Oh! has Jesus even now fulfilled this promise in our individual case? Do we know that the name of Jesus is already written in our hearts? Is that name precious to us now? It is the only name whereby we can be saved. Do we feel that it is such; and, therefore, it is dear to us? It is the name by which we draw near to God — the name of our advocate with the Father — and, therefore, is it dear to us? Do we know Jesus as our Savior? Do we know Him as our advocate?

When troubled and cast down, has that name power to breathe comfort into our souls? When tempted to sin, does that name speak to us as the gentle upbraiding countenance of Jesus did to fallen Peter, and fill our hearts with penitence? and, through faith in that name, have we the victory over sin? If so, if it is all this to us now — then will it be our stay and support on a bed of death; and, after death, we shall fully realize this blessed promise, "I will write upon him my new name." That name will be our eternal cause of joy, for then we shall see the Savior as He is, and know as we are known. Yes, then we shall know fully what we owe to that adorable Savior — what He has suffered for us, and how deserving He is of our highest love and eternal praise.

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ears!
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fears!
"It makes the wounded spirit whole,
And calms the troubled breast;
Tis manna to the hungry soul,
And to the weary rest.
"Dear name! the rock on which I build!
My shield and hiding place!
My never-failing treasury filled
With boundless stores of grace!
"By You my prayers acceptance gain,
Although by sin defiled;
Satan accuses me in vain,
And I am owned a child.
"Weak is the effort of my heart,

And cold my warmest thought;
But when I see You as You art,
I'll praise You as I ought.
“Until then I would your love proclaim;
With every fleeting breath;
And may the music of your name
Refresh my soul in death!”

Revelation 3:15-16

“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth!”

How hateful to the blessed Savior is lukewarmness in His service! He says that if we continue lukewarm, He will utterly reject us! Oh! will not these solemn words from His throne of glory arouse us from our state of lethargy, to something like zeal in His cause, who loved us, and gave Himself for us?

Was the Savior lukewarm when He suffered, and bled, and died for us? Is He now cold towards us? Does He not load us with benefits? And shall we be lukewarm — without heart, without love, without zeal?

When we reach Heaven's mansions of bliss — shall we not wish we had been more earnest while on earth? Oh! how shall we look back and wonder at our unbelief and hardness of heart, that we could possibly pray so little, and love so little, and grieve so much for earthly trifles as light as air, and cleave so fast to the things that endure but for a moment.

If we were always to think, “in a little while — and we shall be in Heaven!” then could we part with all, and be willing to say, “Not my will, but may Your will be done!” Then would we gladly spend and be spent in the service of our God. Then would we gladly meditate on our blessed home, and get so accustomed to the thought of it as our home, that when the summons came for us really to depart hence, it would be no surprise to us, but a welcome message, conveying the glad tidings that our place was prepared on high, our work below accomplished, our warfare over, our glorious crown waiting for us!

“Happy soul, your days are ended,
All your mourning days below.
Go, by angel guards attended,
To the sight of Jesus go!
Waiting to receive your spirit,
Lo! the Savior stands above,
Shows the purchase of his merit,
Reaches out the crown of love.
“Struggle through your latest passion,
To your dear Redeemer's breast,
To His uttermost salvation,
To His everlasting rest.
For the joys He sets before you
Bear a momentary pain.
Die, to live the life of glory;
Suffer, with your Lord to reign!”

Revelation 3:20

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me!”

How affecting is this readiness of Jesus to save us; nay, this earnest desire on His part! He not only stands at the door ready to save — but knocks, invites, urges, presses us to accept salvation. And when the door of the heart is opened to

Him, then He holds the most endearing and close fellowship with the soul that receives Him; then He lets into that soul a portion of Heaven's happiness; for, in his presence, whether here or above, is fullness of joy.

We are often backward to engage in the sacred duty of prayer and meditation; we are cold and lifeless, without feeling or desire. But the Savior says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me!" We feel the Savior's presence, our hearts are warmed, we receive the Savior afresh, and our communion with Him is to us a foretaste of Heaven. Oh! how can we sufficiently value this legacy of Christ to His Church, even the words of the prophecy of this book! Blessed, indeed, is he who reads it, for it seems as if Heaven's glory was shed on every word, as if the very heavens were opened that we might hear the glorified Savior's voice.

In reading the history of our Savior in the Gospels, we feel that He was tabernacling in the flesh; but in hearing these words, which were spoken after He was glorified, we seem to listen to His voice immediately from Heaven. O, reader, believe and be saved; believe that Jesus is now standing at the door of your heart, knocking by His Spirit, asking you to open to Him, that He may come in and take up his abode with you, that He may never leave you nor forsake you, but remain with you through this valley of tears, and then receive you to himself, that where He is — there you may be also.

"Behold a stranger at the door,
He gently knocks — has knocked before,
Has waited long, is waiting still;
You use no other friend so ill.
"But will He prove a friend indeed?
He will — the very friend you need.
The man of Nazareth — 'tis He,
With garments dyed from Calvary!
"Oh! lovely attitude! — He stands
With melting heart and open hands!
Oh! matchless kindness! and he shows
This matchless kindness to his foes!
"Rise, touched with gratitude Divine,
Turn out his enemy and thine;
Turn out that hateful monster, sin,
And let the *heavenly Stranger* in.
"Yet know — nor of the terms complain —
Where Jesus comes, He comes to *reign*.
To reign, and with no partial sway;
E'en thoughts must die, that disobey.
"Sovereign of souls! O Prince of Peace!
O may Your gentle reign increase.
Throw wide the door, each willing mind;
And be His empire all mankind"

Revelation 3:21

"To him who *overcomes* I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne!"

The Savior makes this gracious promise of participation in his glory and reward, to those who overcome. This implies that they have been engaged in a struggle, a warfare, and that they have obtained the *victory*. Let me, then, examine my heart and life, and see if this is my case. Am I engaged in waging war with sin and Satan; or am I indolently indulging self, and hoping for the promise — without fulfilling the conditions of that promise? If I am, indeed, a disciple of Christ, I am now engaged in an arduous struggle. I have many an enemy to contend with; I am a partaker of Christ's sufferings. I have a glorious promise of reward before me for my encouragement, even that of being a partaker of the glory of Christ. After the battle will come victory and everlasting rest. I shall sit down — sit down with Jesus in his throne, reign with my Savior forever; with Him who has obtained the victory for me by His death, and who has enabled me to be *more than conqueror by His all-sufficient grace*.

But let me not look for rest, while I am in the battlefield!

If we are Christ's, and persevere victorious unto death — then, and then only, shall we sit down with Jesus in His throne, and rest from all our conflicts and sorrows. Let me go on my way encouraged and strengthened by this gracious promise, and "looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

"When this passing world is done,
When has sunk yon glaring sun,
When we stand with Christ in glory,
Looking o'er life's finished story,
Then, Lord, shall I fully know —
Not till then — how much I owe.

When I hear the wicked call,
On the rocks and hills to fall,
When I see them start and shrink
On the fiery deluge brink,
Then, Lord, shall I fully know —
Not till then — how much I owe.

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.

When the praise of Heaven I hear,
Loud as thunders to the ear,
Loud as many waters' noise,
Sweet as harp's melodious voice,
Then, Lord, shall I fully know —
Not till then — how much I owe.

Even on earth, as through a glass
Darkly, let Thy glory pass,
Make forgiveness feel so sweet,
Make Thy Spirit's help so meet,
Even on earth, Lord, make me know
Something of how much I owe.

Chosen not for good in me,
Wakened up from wrath to flee,
Hidden in the Savior's side,
By the Spirit sanctified,
Teach me, Lord, on earth to show,
By my love, how much I owe.

Oft I walk beneath the cloud,
Dark, as midnight's gloomy shroud;
But, when fear is at the height,
Jesus comes, and all is light;
Blessed Jesus! bid me show
Doubting saints how much I owe.

When in flowery paths I tread,
Oft by sin I'm captive led;
Oft I fall — but still arise —
The Spirit comes — the tempter flies;
Blessed Spirit! bid me show
Weary sinners all I owe.

Oft the nights of sorrow reign —
Weeping, sickness, sighing, pain;
But a night Thine anger burns —
Morning comes and joy returns;
God of comforts! bid me show
To Thy poor, how much I owe!"
Robert Murray M'Cheyne

Revelation 4:10-11

"The twenty-four elders *fall down* before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and *cast their crowns before the throne*, saying:

You are worthy, O Lord,
To receive glory and honor and power;
For You created all things,
And by Your will they exist and were created."

The *Church triumphant* is represented by the twenty-four elders. Notice their humility. They fall down, and cast their crowns before the Throne, saying, You are worthy. They have been learning to do this on earth. When the Holy Spirit begins his work in the soul of man — when He begins to prepare a *stone* for the spiritual temple, He begins with a lesson of humility, and convinces of sin. And still, as that stone is more and more hewn and fitted for the temple above, deeper and deeper grow the convictions of his own unworthiness, until at length he is taught to abase himself utterly, and give all glory to the Lord.

Are you in this manner becoming every week more fitted for Heaven? Let this glimpse of Heaven which you are now obtaining lead you to ask, "Do I now abase myself — and exalt my God?" Can you answer, "There is, indeed, much self-seeking mixed with my endeavors to glorify my God; and often do I feel anxious to exalt *self* in the estimation of others. But I can in sincerity say, that my desire is that God may be glorified, even though I should be abased; my real desire is for his glory. I could not be happy without this."

In this is the true Christian distinguished from the hypocrite. Whatever may be the failings of the Christian, he grieves that he should bring a reproach on his God and Savior; he acts and speaks from a desire to glorify Him. Though self-esteem and self-exaltation are often mixed with his endeavors, still his aim is, that God may be glorified, even though it be by his own abasement. The more he is enabled to glorify God — the greater is his humility. And the deeper his self-abasement — the more likely is he to bring honor and glory to his God.

O my soul, let this glimpse of glory forever set aside all notions of self-exaltation. Be now what you will be in Heaven, a humble creature of God, redeemed by the precious blood of the Lamb, living to glorify His name!

"Let me be with You where you art,
My Savior, my eternal rest;
Then only will this longing heart
Be fully and forever blessed.
Let me be with You where you art,
Your unveiled glory to behold;
Then only will this wandering heart
Cease to be false to You, and cold.
"Let me be with You where you art,
Where spotless saints your name adore;
Then only will this sinful heart

Be evil and denied no more.
Let me be with You where you art,
Where none can die, where none remove;
There neither death nor life will part
Me from your presence and your love.”

Revelation 5:9

And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy . . . for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation!”

Oh, happy day! when we shall know completely what the blood of Christ, the Lamb that was slain, has purchased for us! On earth we are continually learning the lesson that all our hopes must be derived from His redeeming blood; we are continually forgetting it, and seeking to bring a price in our hands, and to have some merit of our own in the sight of God. The Holy Spirit graciously teaches us the utter hopelessness of being able to do so. By making us despair of finding any ground of merit in ourselves, by showing us our vileness and insufficiency — He trains and prepares us for that blessed place where we shall say, “You are worthy . . . for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood!” Let us examine ourselves, and see if we have in any measure learned this lesson.

Is all our hope in the blood of the Lamb? Are we content to be unworthy — and that Christ alone should be worthy? Oh, my soul, are you thus being prepared for Heaven?

Let us enter now by faith into the mansions of the redeemed, and try to catch their spirit, and say, “You are worthy . . . for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood!”

In these *meditations on heavenly bliss*, we should try as much as we can to render them profitable for our sanctification and growth in grace. They should be seasons of great searchings of heart, when our souls are, as it were, *gazing upon the realities of eternity*, in the sight of the heart-searching God, with all their inmost recesses laid bare before Him. Then would they exercise a sanctifying influence over us. We should be often restrained from what is unworthy of our heavenly hopes, by the thought of the glimpse of Heaven which has left its sweet, yet solemn remembrance. We should say, “How shall we be able to appear before our God prepared, as it were, to sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb — if we indulge this worldly temper or passion? How shall we be able to rejoice in the hope of seeing our blessed Savior — if we have thus dishonored His name, or if we have thus neglected to promote His cause? How shall we meet our Lord with joy, if we thus forget Him now?”

By the blessing of God, we shall thus find our studies to be indeed steps by which we ascend to Heaven, and become more and more fitted for its enjoyment!

Revelation 5:11-12

“Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!”

The fifth chapter of this blessed book contains a wonderful revelation of the *inhabitants* and the *employments* of Heaven. There is the great and gracious God, in whose presence is fullness of joy; the adorable Savior, the Lamb who was slain for us; myriads of ransomed souls out of every nation under Heaven, and an innumerable company of angels. The marvelous work of the redemption of man seems to be the great theme of praise, both with the Church triumphant and with the angels of God.

The Church triumphant sing a new song, and say, “You are worthy, for you were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood!” And the glorious angels echo the same truth with loud voices, saying, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing!” To these bright and holy beings it must indeed be a never-ceasing wonder, that the Son of God should have taken upon Him the nature of sinful man, left the habitations of bliss, and suffered and died a sacrifice to the offended justice of God. In the blessed work of praising the Lamb that was slain, this innumerable company of angels will be our companions in Heaven.

Let us consider for a little while what *happiness* it will be to converse with these pure and sinless beings, to hear from them the history of creation, and the wonders of God’s works. No doubt they will then, as now, minister to our joy. If, as

we know, they now “minister to the heirs of salvation” — is it likely that they will cease caring for, and loving those who have been made partakers of salvation? And delightful will it be to learn from them how they have befriended us in our mortal career; what special evils they were commissioned by God to save us from, what heavenly strength they were sent to convey to us; the *fear* with which their pure bosoms were sometimes filled, lest we should, through our constant backslidings and unwatchfulness, become at last the victims of Satan; and the *joy* they felt when at last they flew to bear us from that conflict, to everlasting victory and glory. Doubtless, we shall commune with them also of the wonderful scheme of man’s redemption, and of the greatness of the love of Christ to our fallen race. And how adoringly shall we join with them in the rapturous song of “*Worthy is the Lamb!*”

“Come, let us join our cheerful songs,
With angels round the throne;
Ten thousand thousand are their tongues,
But all their joys are one!

‘Worthy the Lamb who died!’ they cry,
‘To be exalted thus;’
‘Worthy the Lamb!’ our lips reply,
‘For He was slain for us!’

Jesus is worthy to receive
Honor and power divine;
And blessings more than we can give,
Be, Lord, forever thine!

Let all creation join in one,
To bless the sacred name
Of Him who sits upon the throne,
And to adore the Lamb!”

Beyond the glittering starry skies,
Far as the eternal hills;
There in that boundless world of light,
Our dear Redeemer dwells!

Immortal angels, bright and fair,
In countless armies shine;
Before Him, in transported lays,
They offer songs Divine!

‘Hail! Prince!’ they cry, forever hail,
Whose unexampled love,
Moved You to leave those glorious realms.
And royalties above!’

And while He stooped on earth to dwell.
And suffered rude disdain;
They cast their honors at his feet,
And waited in his train.

In all his toils and dangerous paths,
They did his steps attend;
Oft paused, and wondered how at last,
This scene of love would end.

And when the powers of Hell combined

To fill His cup of woe;
Their wondering eyes beheld his tears,
In bloody anguish flow.

As on the torturing cross He hung,
And darkness veiled the sky;
Amazed they saw that awful sight,
The Lord of glory die!

Anon He burst the gates of death,
Subdued the tyrant's power;
They saw the illustrious conqueror rise,
And hailed the blissful hour.

They thronged his chariot up the skies,
And bore Him to His throne;
Then swept their golden harps, and cried,
'The glorious work is done!'

My soul the joyful triumph feels,
And thinks the moments long,
Before she her gracious Savior sees,
And joins the rapturous song!"

Revelation 5:13

“And every creature which is in Heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!”

Nothing is more striking in the glimpses of Heaven given to us in the book of the Revelation, than that the employment of Heaven is praise. The angels are represented as resting not day or night from this blessed service, but saying continually, “Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty!” and as singing praises to the Lamb, and saying, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing!” The new song of the redeemed in glory is, “You are worthy, for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood, out of every kingdom, and tongue and people, and nation!” Praise is the delight of the inhabitants of Heaven.

Would that it were so to us on earth! Would that we ever lived in the spirit of praise! Then would we enjoy a foretaste of heavenly bliss. There is not a more fruitful or a more blessed state of mind, than that of praise, nor one that is more suited to prepare us for Heaven. Shall we, who know that we have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, and that an eternity of glory awaits us — shall we be melancholy or unhappy? Shall we not rather count all things else but loss? Shall we not weep as though we wept not, for our griefs are swallowed up in the joys of having Jesus for our Redeemer? Oh! let us be ashamed to sorrow as those who have no hope; but rather let us begin now our heavenly life, by rejoicing evermore in the hope of it! Let us go on our way rejoicing with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. Then will the service of God be our delight; we shall adorn the doctrine of God our Savior, we shall recommend religion to others, and show that it is, indeed, a happy thing to serve God. We shall be also preparing for an eternity of praise, when we shall know all that we owe to Jesus, and praise Him evermore.

“The debt of love to Jesus due,
I own, but I can ne'er repay:
And while its vast amount I view,
Augment it still from day to day!”

Will it then really be a happiness to us to sing his praise forever? Does our heart wish for no other joy but this, to praise Him as we ought? If so, then have we indeed, cause to rejoice, for no one could have taught us this but the Spirit of God.

“My rest is in Heaven, my rest is not here,
Then why should I tremble when trials are near?
Be hushed, my dark spirit, the worst that can come
But shortens your journey, and hastens you home.
“It is not for me to be seeking my bliss,
Or building my hopes, on a region like this;
I look for a city that hands have not piled,
I pant for a country by sin undefiled.
“The thorn and the thistle around me may grow,
I would not lie down upon roses below;
I ask not a portion, I seek not a rest,
Until I find them forever on Jesus’ breast.
“Afflictions may press me, they cannot destroy,
One glimpse of his love turns them all into joy;
And the bitterest tears, if He smile but on them,
Like dew in the sunshine grow diamond and gem.
“Let doubt, then, and danger my progress oppose,
They only make Heaven more sweet at the close;
Come joy or come sorrow, whate’er may befall,
An hour with my God will make up for them all.
“A scrip on my back, and a staff in my hand,
I march on in haste through an enemy’s land;
The road may be rough, but it cannot be long,
And I’ll smooth it with hope, and cheer it with song!”

Revelation 7:9

“After these things I looked, and behold, a *great multitude* which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands!”

“Many shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God.” Here we have a missionary *promise* from the lips of our Savior, and in the verse on which we are meditating we have a glimpse of the *fulfillment* of that promise. A great multitude clothed in white robes, standing before the throne, composed of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues! Sweet, a hundred-fold sweet and precious, is this promise to the missionary laboring among the far-off nations of the earth. Jesus has said, that many of those to whom He preaches shall sit down in the kingdom of God.

Sweet and precious is this promise also to the Christian — for is not every true Christian a missionary in heart? Does he not long for the salvation of the heathen? Does he not pray for them? Does he not plead for them, that they may be given to Jesus for his inheritance? Does he not labor in every way he can to promote their conversion? and does he not rejoice to hear, from time to time, of some from among them being gathered into the fold of Christ?

Let us be encouraged by this glimpse of Heaven! There we shall see many of these heathen for whom we have wrestled and prayed, and whom some of us have seen in the flesh. There will be a great multitude whom no man can number, of all nations and kindreds. Will any of that multitude say to us, “But for *you*, I would never have heard of the name of Jesus; but for your prayers and labors, I would not have been here before the throne, rejoicing with you in the Lamb that was slain for us.”

Oh! let our flagging zeal be excited by this glimpse of glory! Now is the time to work, now is the time to win souls, now is the time to labor and pray, that then we may meet many to be our joy and crown of rejoicing in Christ Jesus.

And let us apply this subject searchingly to ourselves. What have I done during the past week to bring others to Christ? What am I purposing, by the help of God, to do this week? Here, and now, would I first give my own soul to God, and then say, “*Lord, what will you have me to do?*”

Revelation 7:11

“All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God!”

What a view do we here obtain of the *humility* of those glorious and sinless beings, the angels of God! They “fall before the throne on their faces” when they worship God. How humble, then, ought we to be, who are not pure and sinless creatures, but vile and sinful dust and ashes, who have forgotten God, and insulted Him times without number! Humble, indeed, we ought to be — yet we are proud, we dislike humility, except so far as God graciously teaches us. Oh! it is He alone who can humble our proud hearts, and thus prepare us for the worship of Heaven. This he does by means of providential chastenings and afflictions. His design in them is to humble us, and prepare us for glory.

And shall we shrink from the process? No, let us lay our proud souls at His feet, imploring Him to undertake the gracious work of teaching them humility. Let us not fear the needful discipline. God is a tender Father — He only wants to make his creatures truly happy. We shall taste real happiness, only as we possess in any degree this heavenly grace of humility. It is a heavenly grace, for it is, as we see here, the disposition of the inhabitants of Heaven. It is a heavenly grace, for it brings into our souls a portion of the happiness of Heaven.

Oh! let us not be afraid to lie low at the foot of the cross! The *valley of humiliation* is a pleasant and a fruitful place; there the smiles of the reconciled countenance of our God are seen; there fellowship with Jesus is felt; there love to man flourishes; there the painful and trembling feelings of pride and selfishness are mortified.

It is, however, only in Heaven that we shall attain to the perfection of this grace of humility, when we shall fully know ourselves, our vileness, our unworthiness, and what we owe to redeeming grace and love. Then only shall we be truly humble, then only shall we be truly happy. Then shall we bid farewell to the misery of sin, and taste the full enjoyment of conformity to the Divine image of Jesus.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.” Matthew 5:3

Revelation 7:14

“These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb!”

When we are in the midst of trial, and actually suffering severely from pain of body, distress of mind, or even from the anticipation of some dreaded event — then Heaven is generally earnestly longed for. Its rest appears so sweet, its freedom from pain so delightful, the prospects of the reunions which will take place there are so cheering. What can we wish for more, we say, than to be done with all the difficulties and conflicts through which we are now passing?

But when the Lord has graciously smoothed our way, and removed the dark clouds which hung over our heads — then our anticipations of Heaven often become less bright, our desires after the land of rest and perfect bliss grow less ardent, and we are content, nay, happy, to remain longer here below.

Reader, has not this been your experience? If so, what does this experience reveal to you? Does it not show that your faith is as yet imperfect, your *heavenly mindedness* far from what it ought to be? For, were your faith in the glorious promises of future bliss more realizing, would not your desire remain as strong after the removal of the dark cloud? Nay, would it not rather increase in fervency from what the Lord had taught you of the *uncertainty* and *vanity* of this world’s best good?

Search your own heart, try yourself, bring your longings after Heaven to this touchstone. Ask when your desire has been most fervent. Has it been while under the rod, while suffering from the chastening of the Lord? Or has it been after the trial has passed away? If the latter, then does your affliction yield rich fruits of righteousness.

We have often experienced a satisfaction of soul, a rest from all earthly desires, a fullness of joy in Christ, which has been a foretaste of Heaven. What, then, will it be to be with Him continually, to be fed and satisfied by Him for evermore?

There the sun shall not light on us, nor any heat. Here on earth, we are often wearied and faint; inconvenience and infirmities attend us, the weak earthly tabernacle presses down the immortal soul; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. In Heaven there will be none of these things: no weariness, no faintings, no scorching, withering heat.

To the missionary in a tropical climate, this promise comes with peculiar sweetness. The sun literally lights on him. To be delivered from heat will be to him a real relief, for it often inconveniences and weakens his earthly frame. And may not our gracious God and Savior have thought especially of these, his missionary servants, when he gave to his beloved John this glimpse of Heaven? Weary missionary! a little while, and you shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on you, nor any heat. Weary Christian! wherever you dwell on earth, look above and beyond

these worldly desires, this weariness, this fainting — to the time when the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, shall feed you, and lead you to living fountains of water!

“My spirit hungers for your love,
Its length, breadth, depth, and height to prove,
Its fullness to explore:
That mystery vast to comprehend,
Which still must human thought transcend,
That sea without a shore.
“My spirit hungers for Your grace,
Its power omnipotent to trace,
Transforming all within;
Refining every low desire,
And, like a purifying fire,
Purging the dross of sin.

Revelation 7:17

“God will wipe away every tear from their eyes!”

Although it is true that “whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives” — still we are not all called upon to suffer great tribulation. God appoints for each, the discipline needed to prepare him for glory. With some He deals gently, for, “He knows how much the weak can bear.” He sees the tenderness of their spirits, the gentleness of their nature. With others He may appear to deal harshly; but He alone knows how hard and stubborn is their will, how great their backslidings, how needful all this seeming severity. He also permits great tribulation to fall upon some, that they may be examples to His Church; examples of love, of patience, of long-suffering — and is not this an honor? Shall we not count it all joy to be thus tried?

And has not God promised to proportion his consolations to the sufferings of his people? With what powerful comfort will such a passage as that we are meditating upon, come home to the deeply-tried Christian; to him whose tears are wrung from him by pain of body, loss of friends, one bitter affliction after another, “God will wipe away every tear from their eyes!”

The anticipation of suffering is often a cause of greater anguish than suffering itself; for though we are told to be anxious for nothing, and to be quiet from fear of evil; still, the anxious mind will often distress itself with gloomy forebodings, while in this *valley of tears*. But in Heaven, we shall have no fear of evil, no cause for fears. God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes: the tear of sympathy, the tear of pity, the tear of separation, the tear of pain, the tear of godly sorrow for sin, the tear of disappointed hope, the tear of wounded affection — shall flow no more, “God will wipe away every tear from their eyes!”

“What tongue can tell, what fancy paint,
The joys which fill the enraptured saint;
When, mixed with Heaven’s triumphant throng,
He shares their bliss, and swells their song!
“His love, so faint and cold before,
In Heaven is faint and cold no more;
It gains the region whence it came,
And lives a pure, eternal flame!

“He feels no pain, he fears no want,
His portion all that God can grant;
To see the Savior as He is,
And dwell in Heaven with Him and His!
“Oh, may I reach that blessed abode,
Where saints obtain their rest in God!
For this let every conflict here

As nothing in my sight appear!”

Revelation 10:5-6

“And he swore by him who lives for ever and ever, who created the heavens and all that is in them, the earth and all that is in it, and the sea and all that is in it, and said, “There will be no more delay!”

“Sweet is the thought — time flies apace!” The worldling cannot join in this sentiment. To him, the thought that *time flies* is anything but pleasant. Time flies, and takes away from him youth and strength, friends, and perhaps riches. Time flies, and leaves him but a short period for enjoyment. He knows that time with him must soon be no longer — and then, ah, then, what is his hope for eternity?

Not so with the Christian, with him who lives for eternity. To him, sweet is the thought that *time flies apace*. Youth and strength are going fast — but eternity is his; and what does it signify to him to lose one drop from the boundless ocean? He can afford to part with youth, for he looks forward to immortality. Christian friends fail, but they are only laid up for him in heaven — kept safe with Jesus, for him to enjoy in the presence of his best, his dearest Friend, forever.

Oh, that this hope, full of immortality, may be mine! — this hope, which will cause me to look not at the things which endure for a time, but at the things which are to endure forever! The Christian living for eternity sits loose to the things of time; as a pilgrim and stranger he does not hold them tightly, dreading, as it were, the moment when he must part with them. But, obeying his Savior’s command, to take no thought for the morrow, he in a measure also forgets the things that are past. He cannot sympathize with those who are forever looking back on their *departed joys*, and mourning that so little is left to them; so little time, so few happy feelings, so few friends of youth. No, he looks forward to what is before him — an immortality of happiness.

Is this my state? If now the angel should swear by Him who lives forever and ever, that there would be no more delay — would I rejoice? If so, then shall I not mourn now at the flight of time, but rejoice in the near approach of an eternity of blessedness, through the merits of my adorable Savior.

“Sweet is the thought — time flies apace,
This earth is not our resting-place;
And sweet the promise of the Lord,
To all who love his name and word.
“Then, Christian pilgrim, dry your tears,
Comfort beyond this valley appears;
An eye beholds you from above,
The eye of God — and God is love.”

Revelation 11:15

“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and He will reign forever and ever!”

“*The Lord reigns!*” is a text dear to the heart of every Christian. He rejoices in the thought that his gracious and Almighty God controls and governs every event great and small — and that He has promised that He shall work all things together for good, to those who love Him.

But, alas! he sees around him an antagonist power — an enemy of God — who is allowed for the present to rule over the children of disobedience and wrath, and for the present to hinder the kingdom of God. Satan’s cause seems to triumph in the world; and sin and Satan are continually striving for the mastery — even in his own heart. Over this he mourns, and this makes him long for the time when the Lord God Omnipotent alone shall reign; when every enemy of God shall be forever destroyed.

Oh! what a bright and glorious glimpse of Heaven is here! “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and He will reign forever and ever!” Then there will be no opposing power, no enemy of God, no enemy of his own soul; every foe vanquished, eternal victory won, fear forever gone, his brightest hopes realized!

Is it now my delight to do the will of God? Is it now my earnest desire that the Lord should reign in me? Does He govern every thought and feeling of my heart? Are my words and actions subjected to His dominion? Is He my King? Then may I hope to participate in the joy of Heaven, when it shall be said, “Hallelujah, the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!”

Is it also my anxious desire that Jesus should reign in the world? What am I doing to promote his cause among the nations of the earth? Have I done anything during the past week? Did I pray, did I give of my substance? Did I exert myself for my Savior’s cause and kingdom? The time for labor is rapidly closing: “Work while it is day: the night comes, when no man can work.”

“Hallelujah! for the Lord
God Omnipotent shall reign;
Hallelujah! let the word
Echo round the earth and main!
Hallelujah! hark, the sound,
From the abysses to the sides,
Wakes above, beneath, around,
All creation’s harmonies.
See Jehovah’s banner furled,
Sheathed his sword! He speaks — ‘tis done,
And the kingdoms of this world,
Are the kingdoms of His Son!”

Revelation 14:3

“And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth!”

What is this song which none but the redeemed can learn? It is the Song of the Lamb! Its theme is, “You are worthy, for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood!” And why can none but the redeemed learn this song? Angels can say, “You are worthy,” but they cannot add, “You were slain for us.” The unbelieving and impenitent cannot learn it.

Are we learning it? For, if we would join in this song in Heaven — we must learn to sing it here on earth. We must learn to know our own unworthiness, our own vileness, and guilt, and danger — and the worthiness of Jesus. We must learn the price at which He has redeemed us, even the price of His most precious blood. We must learn to know something of that love of Christ which surpasses knowledge.

Oh! have we in any measure learned this song? Has our heart been set in tune to join the heavenly chorus? Is it our happiness to us to sing the praises of redeeming love? That love which we delight to meditate upon, and celebrate on earth — will be our theme of praise in Heaven. Yes, we shall there see the depths of His unfathomable love. We shall know the riches of that unsearchable grace which Jesus has bestowed upon us; and we shall then be more than ever willing to ascribe all worthiness to the Lamb.

We are unworthy — but You are worthy! This is the one lesson which we must be ever learning; and we shall only know it fully when we reach the mansions of the blessed, when we shall see Jesus as He is, and “join in the everlasting song, and crown Him Lord of all!”

“Hark, O my soul! What sing the choirs
Around the glorious throne?
Hark! the *slain Lamb* for evermore
Sounds in the sweetest tone!
The elders there cast down their crowns,
And all, both night and day,
Sing praise to Him who shed His blood,
And washed their guilt away!
And this, while here, we will proclaim,
Cheerful in our degree,
That through the blood of God’s dear Lamb,

Our soul may happy be.
But you, O Lord! make every day
Your grace to us more sweet,
Until we behold your wounded side,
And worship at your feet!”

Revelation 14:5

“These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men . . . *they are without fault before the throne of God!*”

To the believer burdened with inward conflict, and struggling against the sin which dwells in him — what a blessed glimpse of Heaven is this! Free from sin — how delightful! What can convey a picture of greater happiness? A joyful multitude without fault before the throne of God! This is the bliss for which he sighs — the end which he purposes through grace to attain. Even now, he is striving after it; striving daily to be without fault. But as he grows in self-knowledge, he sees more and more the many faults and failings into which he falls, and he would sink in despair, and give up the conflict — but for the hope of final victory in Heaven.

“They are without fault before the throne of God!” And when you reach that throne, oh, tempted soul, such will be your happy lot. But remember, you must persevere in your way to it. You must hate every sin, and wrestle and strive after perfect holiness. This alone is the way of preparation for the heavenly bliss to which you aspire. Aim at perfect holiness, long after it, pray for it; and though you do not attain it fully here on earth — yet in proportion as you do attain it, will your hope of glory increase. Yes, you will feel that you are on your way to the mansions of holiness! And the thought that when you arrive there, you shall be without fault, will strengthen and nerve you for the battle. The hope of final triumph and success will encourage you. The certainty of victory will cheer your heart. The assurance of your being forever without fault before the throne of God, will be to you a foretaste of eternal happiness!

“I have a home above,
From sin and sorrow free;
A mansion which eternal love
Designed and formed for me!

My Father’s gracious hand
Has built this sweet abode;
From everlasting it was planned,
My dwelling-place with God!

My Savior’s precious blood
Has made my title sure;
He passed through death’s dark, raging flood,
To make my rest secure!

The Comforter has come,
The earnest has been given;
He leads me onward to the home
Reserved for me in Heaven.

Your love, O precious Lord,
My joy and strength shall be;
Until you shall speak the gladdening word
That bids me rise to Thee!

And then through endless days,
Where all Your glories shine;
In happier, holier strains, I’ll praise

The grace that made me Thine!”

Revelation 14:13

“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord!”

We shall doubtless recognize in Heaven those we have known and loved on earth, who have died in the Lord. They have left us one by one, but it is only for a season; the time will speedily come when we shall rejoin them — when we shall again see those dear ones, when we shall love them with a purer, holier love, and commune with them without the alloys and interruptions which sin occasioned to our earthly fellowship.

There is much comfort also in the thought of the immediate happiness of the souls of the righteous at death: “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.”

Have we lost a precious believing child? It is not lost; Jesus loved it, and said, “Allow it to come to me.” He is keeping it safe, to rejoice with us in Him throughout eternity. Let this thought comfort the sorrowing heart of the bereaved parent. Let it also make us watchful, lest we set our affections too much upon our children. They are but *lent* to us for a little while; we know not when our Lord shall call for them. And for what purpose has He *lent* them? That we might train them for Heaven. Are we doing so? Is that the object of our education of them? Is that the end we have in view for them? Are we only desirous, as far as we can be instruments, to make them fit for the society of angels and of God?

Let us look at everything in the light of eternity, and act as those who are looking not at the things which are *seen* and are *temporal* — but at the things which are *unseen* and *eternal*. Then shall we look back even on the death of a beloved believer with thankfulness and joy, and say, “The memory of the past is precious.”

“In vain our fancy strives to paint
The moment after death,
The glories that surround the saint
When he resigns his breath!

“One gentle sigh his fetters breaks —
We scarce can say ‘he’s gone,’
Before the willing spirit takes
Its mansion near the throne!

“Faith strives, but all its efforts fail,
To trace her heavenward flight;
No eye can pierce within the veil
Which hides that world of light.

“Thus much (and this is all) we know,
They are supremely blessed;
Have done with sin, and care, and woe,
And with their Savior rest!

“On harps of gold His name they praise,
His presence always view;
And if we here their footsteps trace,
There we shall praise Him too.”

Revelation 16:5-7

“You are just, O Holy One, the One who is and who was and who is to be, because You have sent these judgments. For they have shed the blood of Your saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink as they deserve.” And I heard the altar respond: “Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are your judgments!”

There are, in this book of Revelation, not only glimpses of Heaven, and of the happiness of the redeemed — but dreadful views of the punishments of Hell: “And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory . . . and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. They blasphemed the God of Heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.” Revelation 16:9-11

It must be a painful thought to the people of God, that so many of their fellow-creatures are everlastingly banished from the presence of the Lord, and that so many others are following on in the broad road that leads to eternal destruction! Perhaps among both the former and the latter, are some dear to us by the ties of kindred or friendship. Truly this is a most painful thought to us in this present world, but it will not be so in Heaven; for we shall have such a sense of the justice of God in the punishment of the wicked, that we shall acquiesce in their sentence of condemnation, and say, “Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are your judgments! They are worthy of everlasting damnation!”

Oh, my soul, what can I render to my Savior who has delivered my soul from the nethermost Hell? Surely, but for His blood shed for me, I could never have had an entrance into His everlasting kingdom! Let me, then, first learn a lesson of deep humility, of ceasing from vain-glory, and thoughts of my own worthiness. Let me say, “O to grace how great a debtor!”

Then let me learn a lesson of submission to the righteous will of God in His dealings with mankind. What I do not know now — I shall know hereafter; and then shall I be constrained to say, “Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are your judgments!”

Let me also learn a lesson of *diligence in seeking to snatch sinners as brands from the burning*. While they are in this world, God makes use of his people for this glorious end. O let me fear to miss an opportunity of doing good; trembling, lest the charge of blood-guiltiness should be mine, let me be instant in season and out of season, watching for an opportunity of warning sinners of their danger, and, perchance, of saving some. “My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins!” James 5:19-20

“Then shall I see, and hear, and know,
All I desired or wished below;
And every power find sweet employ
In that eternal world of joy!”

Revelation 16:15

“Behold, I will come unexpectedly like a thief! Blessed is he who watches and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed.”

We cannot be too often reminded of the necessity of *watching* for the coming of Christ. We are so apt to grow secure, to settle down in our pleasant places on earth, in our privileges, our means of grace — even in our enjoyment of Christ here below — that we constantly need our Lord’s warning voice, “Behold, I will come unexpectedly like a thief! Blessed is he who watches.” “Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he comes shall find watching.”

Our Savior tells us that his last coming will be *suddenly* — as a *thief* — unexpectedly. And how often does death come in this form, even to the true believer! In our own times, the holy minister of God, Spencer Thornton, fell down dead as he was walking to the railway station; the heavenly-minded Weitbrecht died a few hours after having preached a most affecting and eloquent sermon on the words, “Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!” The sweet Christian poet, James Montgomery, and the godly Dr. Chalmers, were both unexpectedly found dead in their rooms. But these no doubt, were all found watching, ready for their Master’s call. To them to die was gain — *sudden death was sudden glory!* They were not unprepared, walking carelessly, “naked,” but clothed in the righteousness of faith in the Savior whom they loved and served.

And shall we not follow their example? Shall we not set our house in order, expecting the coming of our Lord, ready to go at a moment's notice? If we knew this evening were our last, what would we hasten to do? What would we leave undone? O, why should we make this present world our rest, which never can be? Why should we fix our affections on those things from which we must be weaned, and which we must be forced to give up if we will not now hold them loosely, as only *lent* to us for a little while? "Behold, I will come unexpectedly like a thief! Blessed is he who watches!"

Revelation 19:9

"Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!"

The mystical union of the true believer with his Savior, though *begun* in this life, is not *perfected* until we enter the kingdom of Heaven. That blessed *consummation* of his bliss is compared to the bond of marriage; and the believer looks forward to that consummation with joyful hope. His heart responds to the words, "Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!" To that happy period all his wishes tend, all his hopes aspire. He looks and longs for that promised time when his union with Jesus shall be complete and uninterrupted!

It is true that it is already begun; but, oh! how greatly it is marred by *sin*! How much, and how often it is interrupted by *inconsistency* and *backsliding*! How little does he enjoy of the presence of his Savior, compared with what he will do when his union shall be complete! *Now* is the time of fervent desire and of hope, of doubts and fears, of conflict and uncertainty; but *then* his happiness will be sure and unchangeable, unmixed and overflowing.

In looking forward to this marriage supper, he is supported by hope, which tells him that Jesus is preparing a place for him, and that He will come again, and receive him unto himself — hope, which bids him remember how often the Savior has given him the pledges of his love, when commemorating his death at his table here, and which makes him rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, at the prospect of sitting down at the marriage supper of the Lamb!

The Savior often grants a *glimpse of Heaven* to his people at the sacramental table. He knew how much there would be in this world to damp and obscure their hope, and therefore He appointed the ordinance of the Lord's Supper to be a pledge that, as they were united to Him by faith here, so should they be united to Him forever in a blissful eternity!

"To Jesus, the crown of my hope,
My soul is in haste to be gone;
Oh! bear me, you cherubim, up,
And waft me away to his throne!

"My Savior, whom, absent, I love,
Whom, not having seen, I adore,
Whose name is exalted above
All glory, dominion, and power,

"O dissolve these bonds that detain
My soul from her portion in Thee,
And strike off this adamant chain,
And make me eternally free!

"When that happy era begins,
When arrayed in your glories I shine,
Nor grieve any more by my sins
The bosom on which I recline.

"Oh! then shall the veil be removed,
And round me your brightness be poured;
I shall meet Him whom, absent, I loved,
I shall see whom, unseen, I adored.

"And then never more shall the fears,
The trials, temptations, and woes,

Which darken this valley of tears,
Intrude on my blissful repose!

“Or, if yet remembered above,
Remembrance no sadness shall raise,
They will only be signs of your love,
And themes for my wonder and praise!”

Revelation 21:1

“And there was no longer any sea!”

The *sea* is an emblem of change and variation; ever restless and in motion; though at one time calm, and at another time tossed high by stormy winds, fulfilling its Maker’s word. What can better represent this life, with its ever-changing, shifting scenes, its moments of calm, its long hours of trouble and temptation? But in the Heavenly world, there will be no more sea; all will be eternally unchangeable.

The individual who has spent some months on the restless ocean, will be able to realize the beauty of this image of calm and quiet rest, “And there was no longer any sea!” His longings for the end of his wearisome sojourn on that changeable element will bear a faint resemblance to the believer’s longings after Heaven, the haven of rest. Can I realize the happiness of such a state? Does my soul long for rest, for heavenly rest?

Changes of frames and feelings are very trying to the true believer. When the light of God’s countenance shines upon him, he thinks it will be always so; and as soon as a *cloud* arises, he is distressed and bewildered. But let us not think that, even in this world, it is necessary that we should experience the hidings of God’s countenance: it is not necessary, for they are always caused by sin and unbelief. Our privilege is to rejoice evermore, and it is from lack of faith that we lose our joy in the Lord. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen; and if we constantly looked to Jesus we would walk all day in the light of God’s countenance, rejoicing evermore with a hope full of glory. A portion of Heaven upon earth would be ours. And it is to bring us to this happy life of faith, that all the discipline we are subjected to is designed. “And there was no longer any sea!” — no more change — faith turned to sight, and hope to full enjoyment!

Revelation 21:4

“He will wipe every tear from their eyes. ***There will be no more death*** or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away!”

We all naturally shrink from sorrow, pain, and death. Although these evils are sanctified, and turned into real blessings, to the true Christian, and although his spirit feels that they are blessings — still his weak flesh will and must shrink from them. Sorrow and crying, distress of mind, and pain of body, are so many forerunners of that greatest of natural evils — death!

Death! — the death of those dear to us, and our own death! What can be more appalling? Few can look death in the face; few have courage to meet that formidable foe; and many are all their life-time, through fear of death, subject to bondage. How comforting, then, how strengthening to the soul, to look *beyond* it, to that bright abode where, “He will wipe every tear from their eyes. ***There will be no more death*** or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away!”

These painful things are but for a little time; they will pass away, as a procession passing by. Dwell not on them, but look beyond them, to the time when they shall have passed away. Oh! what is any trial when it is past! Often do we look back almost with positive pleasure on past seasons of great pain and sorrow, because of the blessed advantages or experience they have brought us, and which we now enjoy. And thus will it be in Heaven.

Let us take courage from the thought that sorrow, crying, pain, death, and all other evils, are but passing and transitory. They lead to glory, they are the way to it. “I reckon that *the sufferings of this present time* are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us!”

“Prepare me, Lord, by grace Divine,

For those bright courts on high;
Then bid my spirit rise and join
The chorus of the sky.”

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

“There everlasting spring abides,
And never withering flowers;
Death, like a narrow sea, divides
This heavenly land from ours.

“But timorous mortals start and shrink
To cross this narrow sea,
And linger shivering on the brink,
And fear to launch away.

“Oh! could we make our doubts remove,
Those gloomy doubts that rise,
And see the Canaan that we love
With faith’s illumined eyes!

“Could we but climb where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o’er,
Not Jordan’s stream, nor death’s cold flood,
Should fright us from the shore!”

Revelation 21:7-8

“He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars — their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur!”

Who is it who says these words? “He who was seated on the throne. The Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.” Revelation 21:5-6.

“He who overcomes” — there is no discharge from this conflict — there must be victory won before we receive the reward. But what is the victory? “This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.” (1 John 5:4) It is by faith in the blood of the Lamb that we overcome. Without that faith we cannot be accepted of God, and nothing we do or can do would find acceptance with Him. But by faith in the blood of Jesus, the weakest believer shall, through grace, overcome, and receive the gracious reward here promised!

But, oh! let me examine myself, lest I come under any of the characters described in the eighth verse. Am I *fearful*, am I *unbelieving*? I may have been kept from the grosser sins of murder, adultery, and idolatry — but am I among those who are afraid to confess Christ before men? Am I among those who will not receive the salvation Christ has purchased with his blood? “With the heart man believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” Do I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and own Him before the world?

Do I also put away *lying*? Am I sincere in the sight of God? Does the heart-searching God know my sincerity? And, as far as is consistent with heavenly wisdom, do I hate and avoid concealment and insincerity of all kinds in my dealings with my fellow creatures? Oh, let me diligently examine myself on these points, in order to test my faith in Christ.

Faith in Christ will overcome all these sins. Shall he who is washed, and justified, and sanctified — shall he give way to the gross sins here mentioned? No, you immediately answer. But, further, shall that washed, and justified, and sanctified one be fearful, and unbelieving, and insincere? Oh, no! True faith will overcome these sins too, and the true believer will, through grace, be a courageous, faithful, and sincere follower of the Lord Jesus Christ!

“Not the malicious or profane,
The wanton or the proud,
Nor thieves, nor sland’ers, shall obtain
The kingdom of our God.

“Surprising grace! And such were we,
By nature and by sin,
Heirs of immortal misery,
Unholy and unclean.

“But we are washed in Jesus’ blood,
We’re pardoned through’ his name,
And the good Spirit of our God
Has sanctified our frame.

“Oh, for a persevering power
To keep your just commands!
We would defile our hearts no more-
No more pollute our hands.”

Revelation 21:22

“I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.”

The *means of grace* on earth are the means by which we hold communion with God, and enjoy his presence; but in Heaven we shall not need these means, for we shall be ever present with the Lord. We shall have no need there of a temple consecrated to the service of God, for the perpetual shining of his presence will be our temple. We shall no need of prayer, for we shall have no desire unfulfilled. We shall no need of commemorating the dying love of Jesus, for the Lamb that was slain will be forever in our sight — and how can we then forget his great and incomparable love? Here on earth, we can only enjoy the presence of God through his means of grace; and how often do we rest in the outward means, without realizing His presence! How often do we listen to sermons, without hearing them as the words of God, addressed to us by his minister! How often do we follow that minister in prayer without holding spiritual fellowship with God!

Let us meditate on this description of Heaven, until we, in some faint measure, realize it upon earth. May the presence of the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb, constitute the glory of our assemblies of saints! May meeting our God and Savior be the object for which we meet together, and may we thus enjoy in his temple on earth a glimpse and foretaste of Heaven! The believer has sometimes had a vision of glory on earth; and when has it been? When he has been brought by faith into the presence of God, and has felt the Holy Spirit pouring peace and joy into his soul.

The worldling may ask, “And is this all you expect to enjoy in Heaven?” Yes, we answer, but in a far greater degree, and in a perfect manner. And, comparatively little as is this foretaste of Heaven, it is enough to make the believer long after the everlasting presence of his God, and feel that he shall indeed be satisfied when he shall arrive at that city where there is no temple, but where the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb is the temple of it.

“I love to think of Heaven, where I shall meet
My fellow-travelers, and where no more
With grief, or sin, my mind will be disturbed,
Where holy saints and holy angels dwell,
In constant harmony and mutual love.
But when my heart anticipates the sight
Of God Incarnate, bearing on his side,
And hands, and feet, those marks of love Divine,
Which He on Calvary for me endured,
All Heaven beside is swallowed up in this;
And He, who is my hope of Heaven below,
Appears the glory of my Heaven above.”

Revelation 21:23

“The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp!”

What a beautiful idea does this verse give us of the nature of the happiness of Heaven! There God is all in all. God is all-sufficient to make his people happy. They need not the sun and moon, they need not the creature — for the Lamb is their light, their glory, their all.

We know not how far we may still possess the sensibilities of our nature, purified and sanctified. We may infer from Scripture that some of them will remain. For instance, Paul is said to look forward to his converts being his joy and crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus. Lazarus is represented as enjoying the society of Abraham, etc. But of this we are certain, that the creature will there no longer occupy the place of the Creator; there we shall be in no danger of idolatry and creature-love; there every affection will be in subordination to that of love to God.

Oh! let us aim at this state of mind now, this heavenly-mindedness, this preparation for Heaven! May Jesus be our all in all now! May He be the light of our souls now, the light through which we view everything else, the light which makes everything we value precious to us, and which even sheds its brightness on afflictions and crosses.

Is the Heaven you look forward to being with Jesus! Without Him Heaven would not be Heaven! Can you say, “Whom have I in Heaven but You, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside You?” If so, then will you rejoice in this description of the new Jerusalem, “The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp!”

“Object of my first desire,
Jesus, crucified for me!
All to happiness aspire,
Only to be found in Thee.
“Lord, it is not life to live,
If Your presence You deny;
Lord, if You Your presence give,
Tis no longer death to die!
“Source and giver of repose,
Singly from Your smile it flows;
Peace and happiness are Thine,
Mine they are, if You are mine.”

Revelation 21:27

“Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful — but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life!”

In this verse we have a glimpse of the holiness of Heaven. It is peculiarly a holy place. Sin is excluded. Those who love sin, those who do the abominable things which God hates, and especially those who are shameful or deceitful — shall have no part in it; but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life, whose sins are pardoned through the blood of the Lamb, and whose hearts have been renewed by the sanctifying Spirit of grace.

O my soul, meditate awhile on this description of Heaven, and tremble while you search your heart, and try it by this touchstone! Do you harbor any one sin? If called to enter your rest this evening, would the love of any one sin be found lurking within your heart? Especially, have you put away from you deceit and lying of every description? Do you love and practice truth? Is your character simple and transparent, so that you can appeal to Him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and say, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!”

Often have you meditated on Heaven, and rejoiced in hope of its excellent glory. But, oh! forget not its purity, its holiness. Let meditation on Heaven have a sanctifying influence on your heart and conduct. Let it make you dread sin, and

fear lest you should come short of that glory. And when cast down and almost in despair because of the sin which still remains in you, look up to Jesus, to Him whom you trust has written your name in the Book of Life. He has the Holy Spirit to bestow, and He will bestow Him in rich abundance, and by his sanctifying grace will prepare you for the holiness and happiness of Heaven.

“Heaven is a place of rest from sin,
But all who hope to enter there
Must here that holy course begin
Which shall their souls for rest prepare!”

Revelation 22:1-2

“Then the angel showed me the *river* of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the *tree* of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.”

We may consider these symbols of the river of life, and the tree of life, as expressive of: the happiness of Heaven, the nature of that happiness, and its duration.

We here learn that we shall be happy, happy forever, and that our pleasures shall be holy and pure.

These emblems represent Christ, and the benefits we shall eternally receive from Him — even eternal life and happiness. “This is the promise that he has promised us, even eternal life.” We shall never leave, we shall never die — being forever with Jesus, He will be the maintainer of our spiritual life forever. It was He who, by His Spirit, began this life in our souls. He gave us to drink of that water which is a well of water springing up unto everlasting life — and in Heaven He will still be the maintainer of that life to all eternity.

And we shall not only live forever, but we shall drink of the pure river of the water of life; we shall enjoy eternal happiness, and our pleasures shall be pure, because they spring from God and the Lamb as their source. We know not the precise nature of these pleasures, but we know that they will, they must be holy pleasures, and therefore they will be satisfying. Yes, in His presence is fullness of joy — pure and satisfying bliss.

O blessed Jesus! to procure this happiness, and to purchase this eternal life for me — you suffered poverty, and pain, and anguish! Let me, then, willingly undergo the discipline you shall see necessary to prepare your unworthy servant for such an eternity! Let me seek my happiness now in pure and heavenly pleasures. Let me flee from sin, and walk with the light of eternity shining around my path; and may You lead me at last to living fountains of water, and feed me forever with the tree of life!

Revelation 22:2

“The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.”

We will not now endeavor to explain this verse, but rather confine ourselves to meditation on a topic so delightful as the healing of our souls from the dreadful disease of sin. If we are Christians, we must know that our present state is one of spiritual sickness; and that none but Jesus can be our Physician. We have need continually to utter the cry, “Heal my soul, for I have sinned against You!” Daily and hourly have we need to go with our *soul sicknesses and infirmities* to our heavenly Physician, and entreat Him to heal us, and strengthen us.

Naturally there is no spiritual health in us; and it is, indeed, a source of exquisite joy when we feel that Jesus has, by His all-powerful Spirit, undertaken the cure of our souls; and exquisite also is the joyous prospect of entire renovation and health in Heaven, when we shall eat of the tree of life, and be completely healed! Oh, the more we know of our spiritual weaknesses, infirmities, and sins — the greater will be our joy at the prospect of deliverance from them!

The whole need not a physician, but those who are sick. Blessed Savior! Undertake and carry on the work of restoration, until it is perfected in Your paradise above! You are —

“My soul’s Physician, great, and good,
Her sores who bound;

Which were without Your precious blood
A cureless wound!”

We are like those who place themselves in the hands of a skillful physician, with a knowledge of their dangerous disease, and confidence in his ability to cure. But we have this advantage; that while, in such a case, uncertainty and suspense must necessarily ever be connected with our confidence. In the case of our souls, we are sure that the blood of Jesus Christ can cleanse us, the power of Jesus Christ can heal us. “Ours cannot be a desperate case,” for our Physician is Almighty.

“Physician of my sin-sick soul,
To You I bring my case:
My raging malady control,
And heal me by Your grace!”

Revelation 22:3

“No longer will there be any curse!”

Our beautiful world, filled with the wonderful works of God, bears evident traces that it is not what it was created at first. It bears everywhere, the marks of a great change, which change is accounted for in the Bible by the fall of Adam. God made everything very good; man sinned, and the curse came upon himself and the whole creation. Though still beautiful, yet how much is its beauty *marred* and *defaced*! Now, thorns and thistles spring up where once were only lovely flowers and sweet fruits. The beasts of the forest, though still beautiful in outward form, now possess violent and ferocious dispositions; and the beasts of burden groan under the tyranny of man. Man himself is subject to labor and toil, to sickness and death; and even his most innocent enjoyments are marred by sin.

But thanks be to God, the promise of deliverance from the curse sounds in our ears in this blessed revelation, “No longer will there be any curse!” Where, then, is the land of blessing and perfection? It is that land which is very far off; that paradise which Christ is gone to prepare for us; that “rest which remains for the people of God.”

Here on earth, even our very blessings are mixed with signs of the curse. But there shall be no more curse in our Heavenly home: no more toil and labor, no more weariness and faintness, no more hunger or thirst, no more bitter cold or burning heat, no more disappointment, no more sorrow, no more pain, no more sickness, no more death!

In Heaven, there shall be no more curse, but perfection of bliss. Who can conceive the happiness of such a state? For this, the whole creation groans and travails in pain, eagerly waiting for its consummation. Let us, then, who have such exceeding great and precious promises, when sighing under the effects of the curse in any of its forms — gladly turn our thoughts to meditation on Heaven’s glorious realities! And when admiring the beautiful works of God, which still exist to show us what they once were — let us also turn our thoughts to the greater beauty and glory of our Paradise above.

“O God, O good beyond compare,
If thus Your meaner works are fair;
If thus Your beauties gild the span
Of ruin’d earth and sinful man;
How glorious must those mansions be
Where Your redeemed shall dwell with Thee!”

Revelation 22:3

“No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and **His servants will serve Him!**”

It is the fervent desire of the renewed heart to serve the Lord, to be employed in the Lord’s vineyard, and to do some little work for Him. Often does the prayer ascend, “O Lord, *use* me; O Lord, *employ* me; let me do *something* in Your cause — something for Your honor and glory.” And the Lord hears and answers this prayer; making use of weak means to

produce wonderful effects — even making use of a word spoken in His name to the conversion of the heart of a sinner to Himself.

And in proportion as that prayer ascends will the Lord answer it; and not until we arrive in Heaven, shall we know to what extent he has deigned to use our poor instrumentality to promote His glory. But, oh! in that blessed abode, we shall render *perfect* obedience and service. There His servants shall serve Him; there it will be our joy and delight to do His will; partaking with the blessed angels in their holy pleasure in doing His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word — we shall never cease from the blessed employment.

We know not in what *manner* we may be employed by God, but we know that it will be the delight of our perfected holy natures to serve Him. In some little measure we begin to partake of this happiness here; for what can exceed the pleasure which the smallest act done from love to God imparts? In keeping His commandments, there is great reward even here on earth. What, then, will be the happiness resulting from the perfect obedience we shall render in Heaven?

O my God! accept now my poor, imperfect endeavors to serve You. Most gladly would I spend and be spent for You here; and, oh, bring me in Your good time to that place where I shall serve You without weariness and without imperfection!

Is this the prayer of your heart, O reader! Do you cheerfully accomplish the things which God would have done by you? Do you say, “Lord, what will You have me to do?” And is it your delight to serve God? These are blessed tokens for good that you will be among the number of those who shall be engaged in the happy and perfected service of God in Heaven.

Revelation 22:4

“They will see His face!”

What a promise is this! We shall see the face of God and the Lamb who was slain for us! We shall see the face of God in Christ! We shall see Jesus, whom having not seen, we love! All happiness, all satisfaction is comprehended in this! Long have we believed, though we have not seen; long have we desired the glorious vision of Him whom our souls love — then shall it be realized! We shall see His face!

If it has been our great delight here below to hear of His loveliness and beauty, and to have a spiritual sense of His presence — what will it be to see the substance of our hope! Yet this happiness will most assuredly be ours — we shall see His face!

While we meditate on this hope, may it exercise its transforming power upon us, and conform us now to the image of Christ! “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory!” 2 Corinthians 3:18

If we hope hereafter to see His face, we must now be, in some measure, changed into the same image. The same holy character must be formed in us, which was in Christ Jesus. He has set us an example, that we should walk in His steps — in His steps of humility, of self-denial, of devotion, of love to God and men, and of zeal for the glory of God.

Are we treading in these steps? Do we bear His image now?

In one sense, all, both just and unjust, will see the face of Christ; but if we would see His face with joy, and continue in the everlasting vision of it — we must bear the image of Christ now. Let us come down from the mount of heavenly meditation, retaining this truth in our memories, and resolved henceforth to seek more earnestly, the grace and help of the Holy Spirit by whom we shall be conformed to the likeness of our Savior!

“Jesus, my Savior, let me be,
More perfectly conformed to Thee.
Implant each grace — each sin dethrone,
And form my temper like Thy own!”

Revelation 22:5

“There shall be no night there! They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever!”

While in this world, our weary bodies require the refreshment of sleep; and our merciful God has graciously given to us this sweet restorer of strength. Often we have retired to rest overcome with fatigue and anxiety — perhaps distressed with pain — but sleep has taken away these feelings, and we have risen the next day in health and peace, to serve our God with joyfulness.

But there will be no night in Heaven, because there will be no need of rest from labor, of relief from pain, of solace and refreshment under fatigue. The former state of things will have fully passed away, and *one unclouded day* will have dawned upon us! Our *spirits* will then be made perfect — and at the resurrection our glorified *bodies* will rise, no more to be a clog upon our souls' enjoyment.

On a bed of sickness, this text has often been a source of comfort to the believer, "There shall be no night there!" A night of pain and wakefulness, is often a time in which God teaches His people. In the midst of active employment, the soul is not at leisure for reflection; and even in the short periods devoted to retirement for prayer and meditation — the thoughts are often strangely distracted by what has gone before, or by the anticipation of coming events. But in a night of weariness and pain, there seems to be a rest from outward things; the soul is brought to a stand before God — it must think, it must reflect, it must examine itself, and ask if all is safe for eternity — if it is in Christ, if it is prepared to die.

Blessed result of pain, if led thereby to seek the Lord Jesus, and find rest in Him! Blessed result of pain, if led thereby to meditate on Heaven's eternal day of rest!

"There shall be no night there!" No wearisome hours of discipline — no learning the dark intricacies and windings of the heart, and the deceitfulness of sin. There shall be no night there — no night of error, no darkness of soul, no dark, unbelieving thoughts of God, and of his ways; but all will be clear, bright and shining to all eternity! The *way* by which the Lord our God has led us, will then be seen. The *retrospect* will be clear; even as now, in the night of sickness, God often shows it to us. We will see that our path has been a safe and right one, and we glorify our gracious God.

"He led them forth by the *right* way, that they might go to a city of habitation." Psalm 107:7

Revelation 22:20

"He who testifies to these things says, 'Surely, I am coming soon!' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus."

How long, how long shall we be seeking our rest here on earth, forming one plan after another, and expecting happiness from each! Disappointed in one, and finding it a *broken cistern* that can hold no water — shall we still seek out another and another? Oh! let us cease from these vain expectations, and learn at once and forever the lesson which God would teach us, and which would make us truly happy. "As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness!"

Yes, then, and not until then, shall we be truly satisfied; then, and not until then, may we expect perfect rest, and perfect bliss. Let us look to the coming of Jesus for happiness, and expect it not before. Then will our hearts sweetly respond to the tidings of His approach, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Then shall we welcome death, and truly love the appearing of Christ. He says, "Surely, I am coming soon!" But a very little while have we to be in this *state of conflict and unrest*; quickly the day of our redemption draws near — the longed-for day, the expected, the welcome day. Can we say sincerely, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly — either by death or by judgment. "As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness!" Psalm 17:15

"He Himself has done it!" Isaiah 38:15

He Himself has done it all. O how those words
Should hush to silence every murmuring thought!
'*He Himself has done it!*' He who loves me best,
He who my soul with His own blood has bought!

'*He Himself has done it!*' Can it then be anything
Than full of wisdom, full of tenderest love?
Not one unheeded sorrow will He send,
To teach this wandering heart no more to rove!

'He Himself has done it!' Yes, although severe
May seem the stroke, and bitter be the cup,
'Tis His own hand that holds it, and I know
He'll give me grace to drink it meekly up.

'He Himself has done it!' O, no arm but His
Could e'er sustain beneath earth's dreary lot;
But while I know He's doing all things well,
My heart, His loving-kindness questions not.

'He Himself has done it!' He who's searched me through,
Sees how I cleave to earth's ensnaring ties;
And so He breaks each reed, on which my soul
Too much for happiness and joy relies.

'He Himself has done it!' He would have me see
What *broken cisterns* human friends must prove;
That I may turn and quench my burning thirst
At His own fount of ever-living love!

'He Himself has done it!' Then I would gladly say,
'Your will in all things evermore be done;'
E'en though that will remove whom best I love;
While Jesus lives I cannot be alone.

'He Himself has done it!' Precious, precious words;
'Himself,' my Father, Savior, Brother, Friend;
Whose faithfulness no variation knows;
Who, having loved me, loves me to the end!

And when, in His eternal presence blessed,
I at His feet my crown immortal cast,
I'll gladly own, with all his ransomed saints,
'He Himself has done it!' — **all**, from first to last!

“He has done all things well!” Mark 7:37